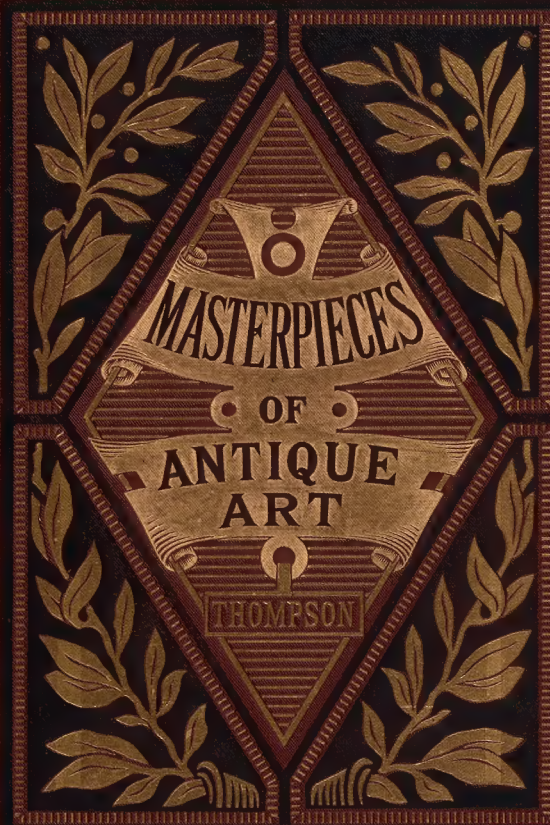
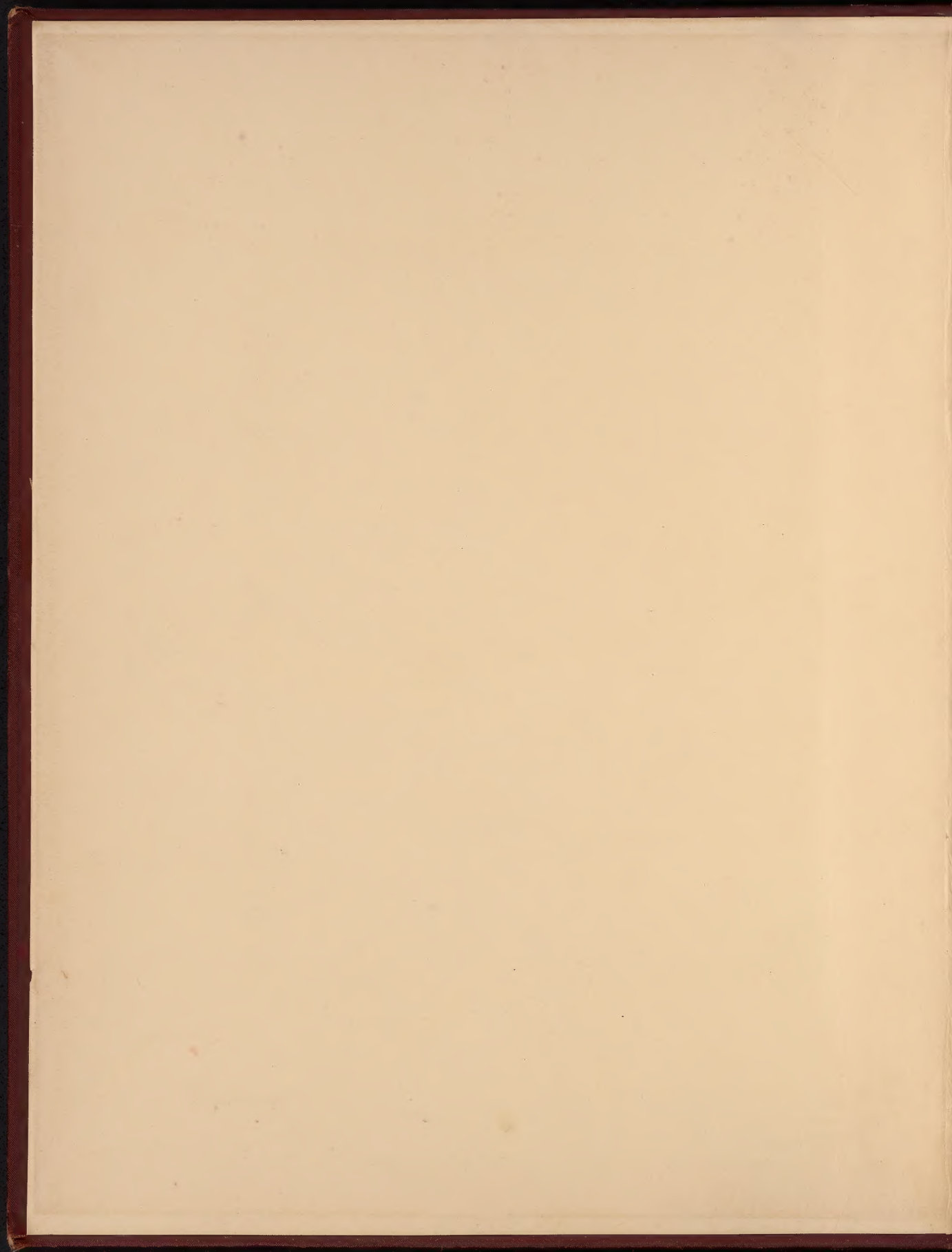


PHIDIAS PRAXITILES MYRON



LYSIPPUS AGESANDER CEPHISODITUS





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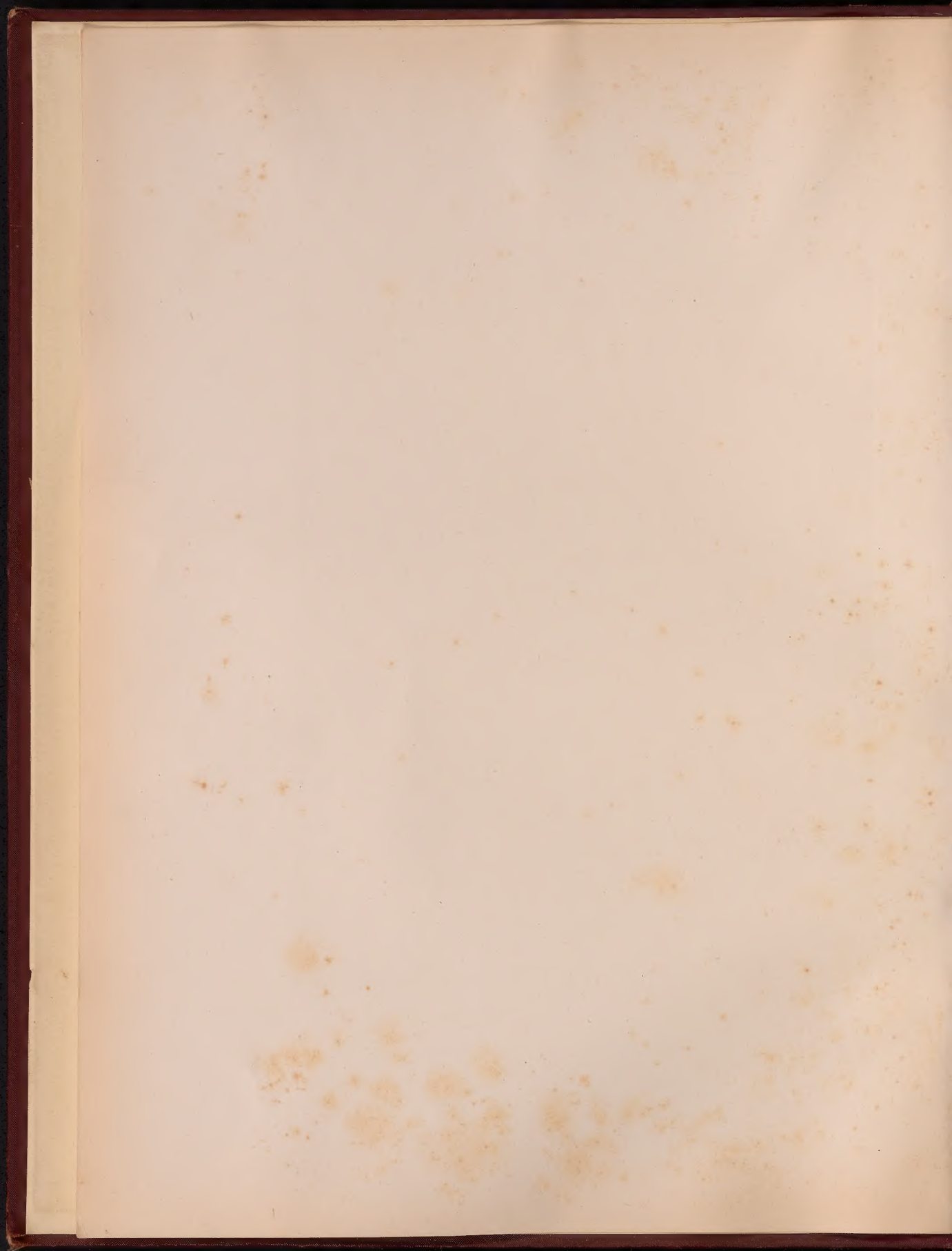
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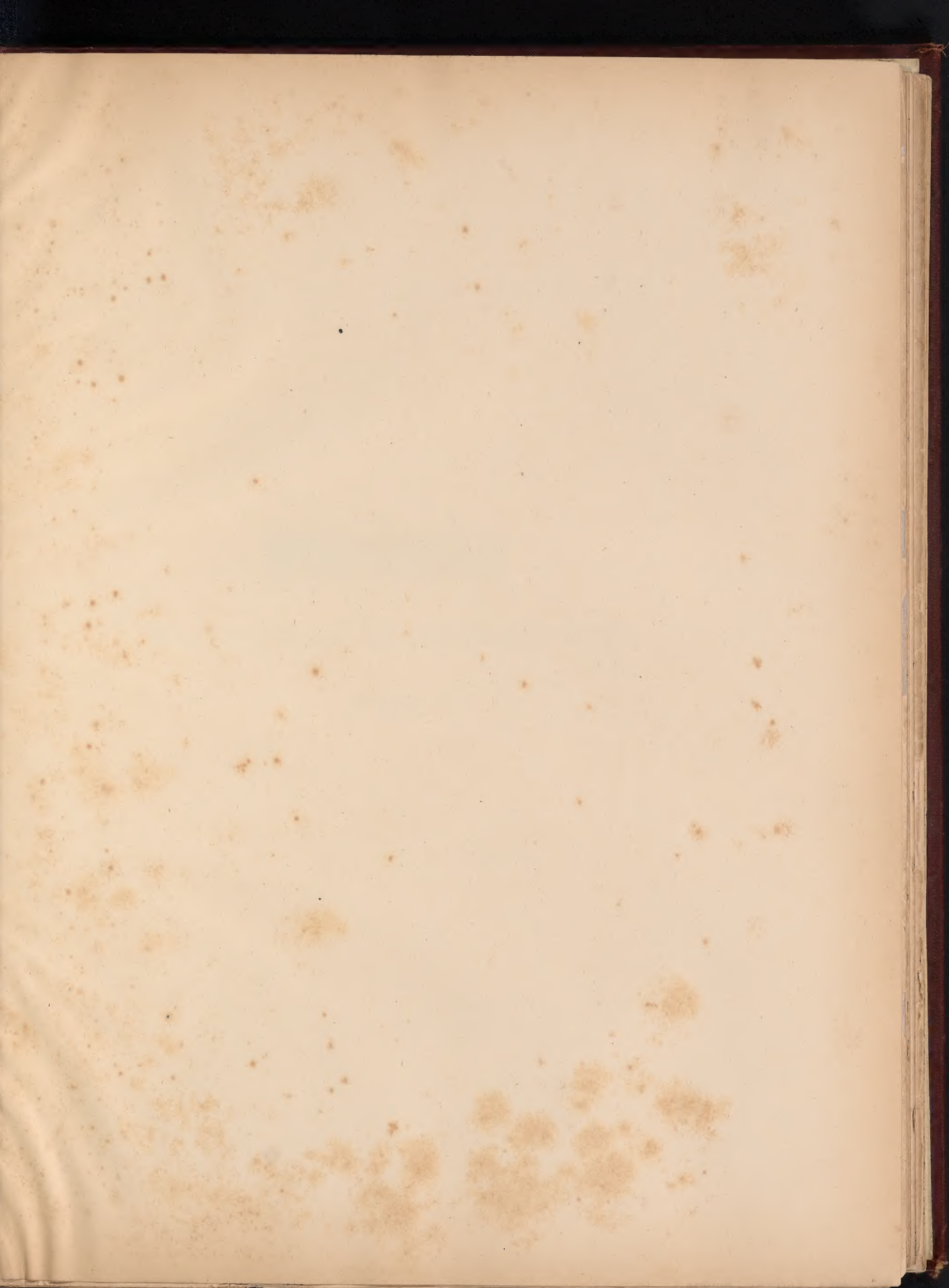
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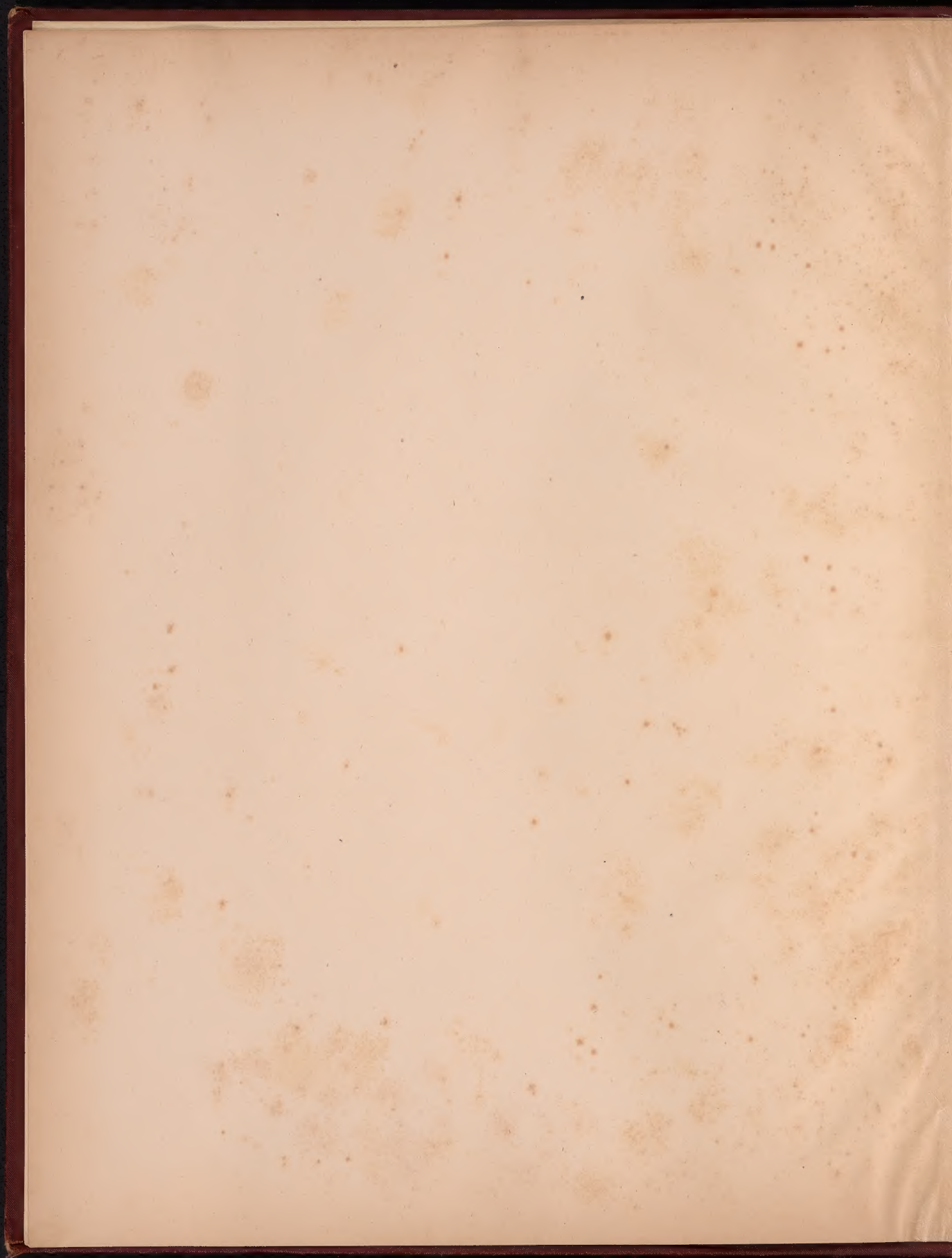
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MASTERPIECES OF ANTIQUE ART.









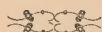
# MASTERPIECES OF ANTIQUE ART

TWENTY-FIVE EXAMPLES IN PERMANENT PHOTOGRAPHY

FROM THE CELEBRATED COLLECTIONS IN THE

VATICAN, THE LOUVRE, AND THE

BRITISH MUSEUM.



BY STEPHEN THOMPSON.

AUTHOR OF "OLD ENGLISH HOMES," "OLD MASTERS,"

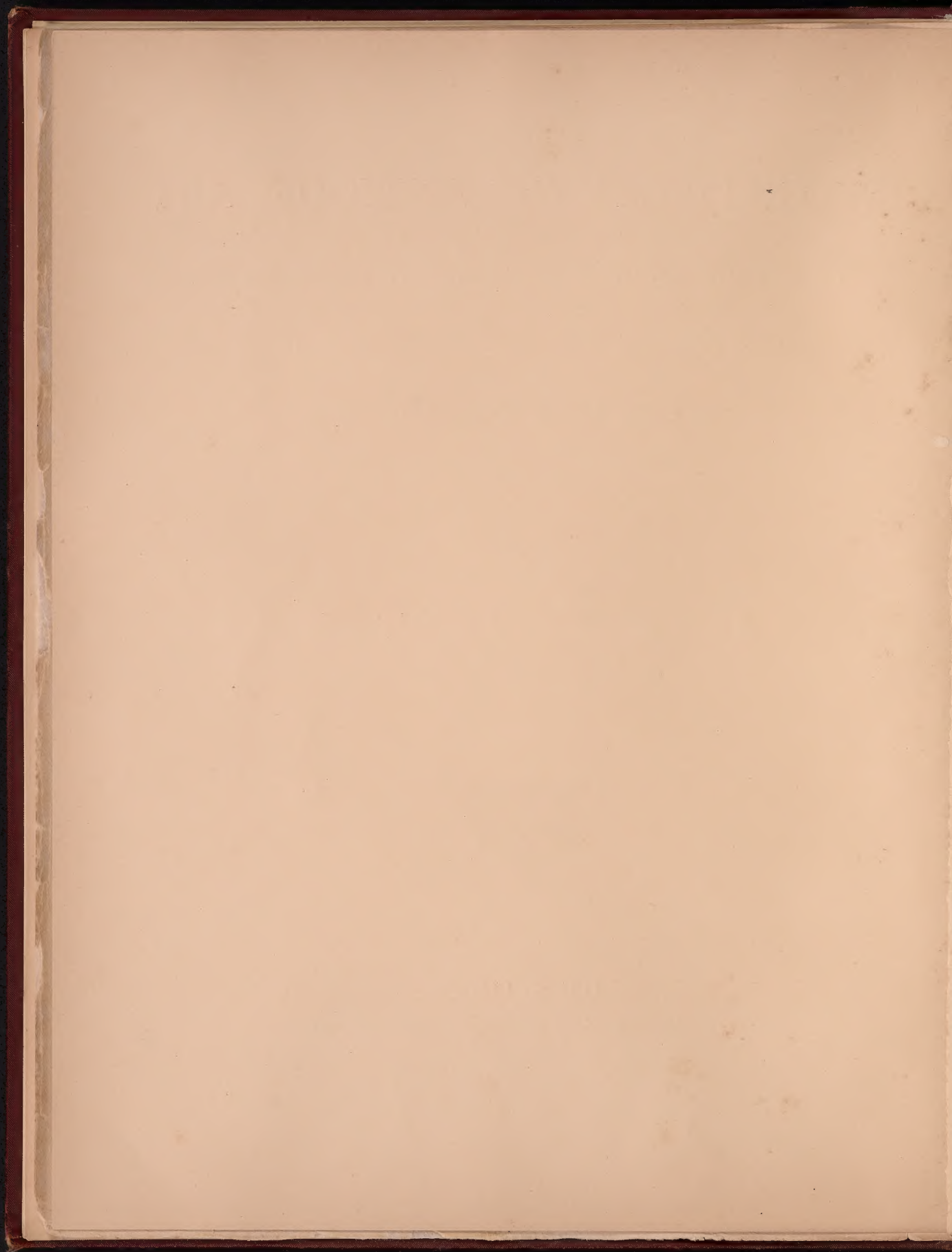
ETC. ETC.



NEW YORK:

**E. P. DUTTON & Co.**

GRIFFITH & FARRAN, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON.







## PREFACE.

**U**NQUESTIONABLY one of the signs of the times is the growing conviction that the study of classic literature and art should be prosecuted together as a whole, and thus used to afford mutual illustration. It has been well remarked by one of the greatest living authorities, that "Archæology is the twin-sister of Philology, and without the two combined the past is a mere vision of the imagination. It is the union of the two which does all that is possible to realize the past in all its varied features." The study and knowledge of the ideas embodied by the Greeks in their imitative arts, and especially in sculpture, deserve to occupy a more prominent position in the curriculum of a liberal education. The present work, though it cannot—from the necessary limitations of cost and size—offer an exhaustive collection of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Ancient Sculpture, contains, however, many of the best examples that have come down to us from antiquity. It has also been my aim to set side by side with the reproductions, made direct from the originals

in the various national Museums, much of what has been said or thought of these great works by competent authorities, a result which could not be achieved by the reader without constant reference to costly and ponderous works, not generally available.

In the preparation of the descriptive matter I desire to record my obligations to the works, amongst others, of Visconti and M. de Saint-Victor; and in the more material part of my labours to the facilities afforded me by Signor Hercules Massi, of the Vatican.

S. T.





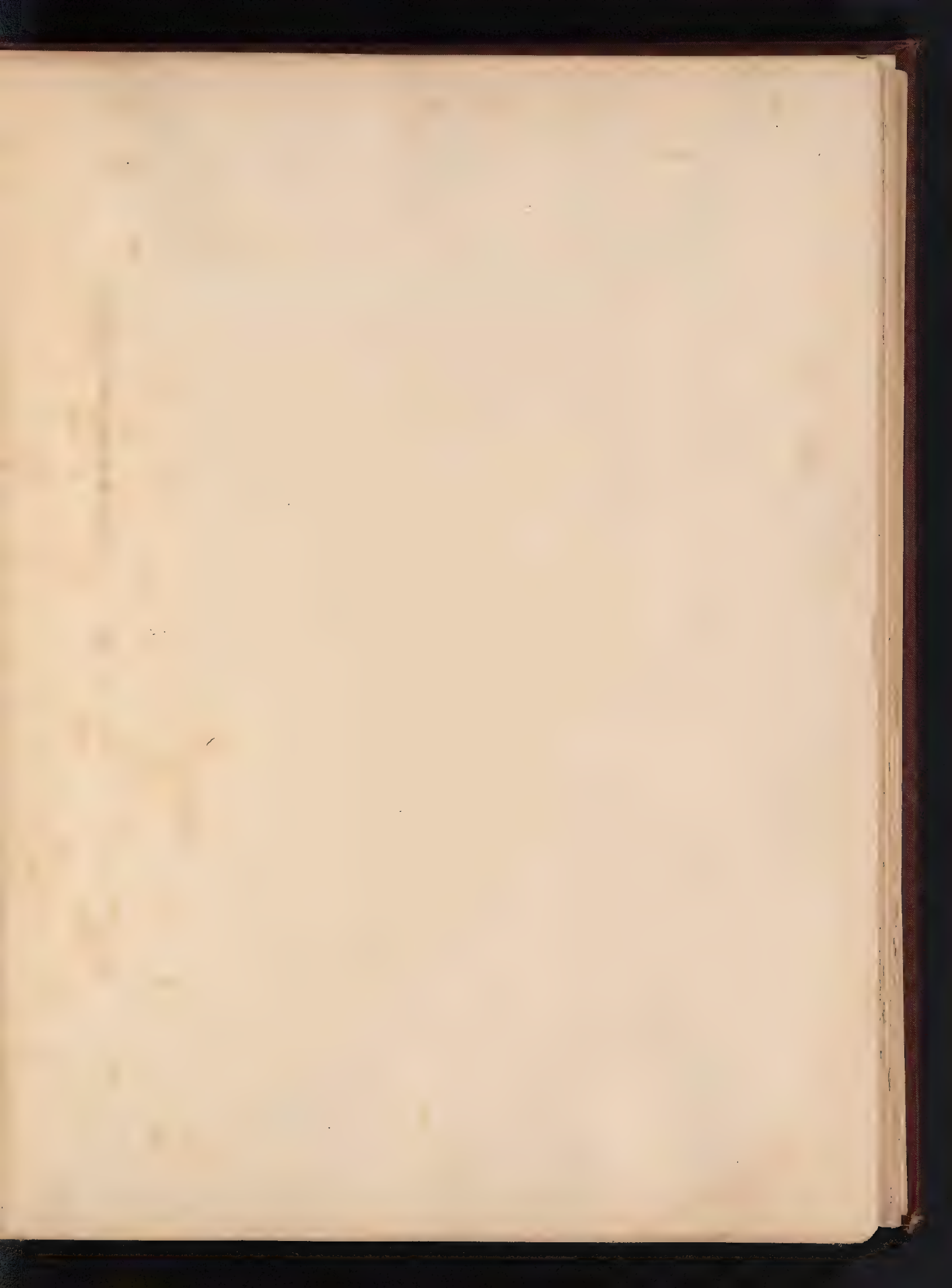





Fig. 1. — Truth and Liberty.





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## THE DISCOBOLUS.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

**T**HIS statue of a Greek disc-thrower is one of three marble copies of the celebrated bronze by Myron, so minutely described by Lucian and Quintilian. Myron was an Athenian, and a pupil—together with Phidias and Polycletus—of Ageladas of Argos, but evidently older than his fellow-scholars. He is said to have introduced a greater variety in his art than those who preceded him; but Pliny says he was not successful in expressing sentiment or passion, and that in his art treatment there was still much of the stiffness of the early schools. Professor Westmacott writes, “that, though his style was probably hard and minute, yet he must be considered one of those sculptors by whose assistance the art was brought to excellence;” and Luebke again, with reference to the same subject, says, that “looking at such works as this we feel that Greek art at that time had attained to the highest freedom in the conception and representation of the human frame, and in the delineation of the most difficult and

boldest actions, and that she only lacked for her perfection the intellectual depth and thoughtful feeling of a Phidias."

Myron particularly excelled in the management of bronze, and was also remarkable for the variety of subjects he treated with success. He was equally great in the representation of animal nature, and his lowing cow with the sucking calf has been immortalized by a number of witty epigrams, which commend the illusive truth of the representation with all kinds of ingenious turns. Even in Cicero's time this cow stood in the great square at Athens. It was afterwards brought to Rome, where, in the days of Procopius, it might be seen in the Temple of Peace. Four other oxen by Myron were set up by Augustus in the vestibule of the Palatine Apollo.

But even as Polycletus excelled in his statues of youthful athletes, so did Myron in representing the more manly forms of the Pentathli and the Pancratiastæ, with all the strength of swelling muscles and in the most daring positions, or in the lighter exercises of running and hurling. Thus the running Ladas, shown in the last extreme of exertion at the decisive moment of victory, and the Discobolus, an equally learned work of art, in which the greatest difficulties were conquered, are perhaps those most renowned of all his achievements.

This most interesting example of Myron's manner is life-size, and represents an athlete nude, just as he is in the act of stooping to hurl the discus with all his force in one of the public games. The statue is full of action, even to exaggeration, and the character of form and style of execution associate it with the known date of its author. The figure leans forward, resting the weight of the body on the right leg, upon which the left arm, crossing the body, rests just above the wrist. The right arm is extended behind the figure, and the upraised hand, spread out firmly,



grasps the disc, which is just about to be hurled vigorously forward. The head looks down. There is a peculiar expression very true to nature given in the dragging of the left leg, or rather foot, of which the toes are bent, showing their under side. The strained and laboured attitude seems scarcely natural to moderns, and does not exactly accord—for the most part—with the notion of a man launching with all his force a mass so heavy as a disc; but experience teaches us to see that in such a moment, although laboured and difficult, the athlete is not unnatural, and Lucian's description gives an idea of a pose exactly similar to that of the statue here depicted.

"The Discobolus," he says, "has the body bent in advance, and the head turned towards the hand which carries the disc, as if preparing to hurl it. His knee, lightly bent, plainly indicates that at the same time that he launches it he can recover himself all at once."

In a description of youthful athletes the author of the *Thebaïde* more exactly still, and with more detail than Lucian, reviews the Discobolus in all the violent movements of exertion which he executes:—"Examining the circumference of his disc, in order to seize it in the manner most sure and convenient, the body curved, and both knees bent towards the earth, gathering all his force, and elevating the disc he is about to hurl above the level of his head, raising his face as he straightens himself in all his full height after launching it." The rest of the singular attitude expressed by this great artist was a faithful imitation of a movement used by the athletes when exercising themselves with the game. "If we blame the posture as unnatural," says Quintilian, "we but show our own ignorance and fault-finding precisely in the same degree as the excellence of these priceless works."

In the eulogiums of the ancients two Discoboli are spoken of,

the other statue being the view in the moment that preceded the action of launching his disc. These two celebrated works were greatly multiplied by Greek artists working for Roman masters, and the adornment of their luxurious villas. The most celebrated work of the "Discobolus Preparing," was by Naucydes, a sculptor of Argos, a copy of which is in the Vatican Museum.

The disc conforms to the description that Lucian has left us, and was in form that of which the use was the most ancient and also the most general. It presented on the surface no line, or band, or handle, but was smooth and level, of a lenticular form; and the edges thinned with a delicacy which seems to indicate that it was not a disc of stone like that spoken of by Homer, when he describes the games of the Pheacians, but of metal, and doubtless of bronze. Pausanias speaks of the discs which had served in the combats of Olympia, and which were preserved amongst the treasures of the Temple.

On the trunk that supported the statues was usually suspended the strigil which the ancients employed in the bath to detach from their bodies the sweat and dust, and which the athletes—who also anointed themselves with perfumed oil—used for the same purpose.

This example was found at Tivoli (1791), on the site of what is believed to be the picture gallery of the Emperor Hadrian. The head, though antique, does not belong to the statue.



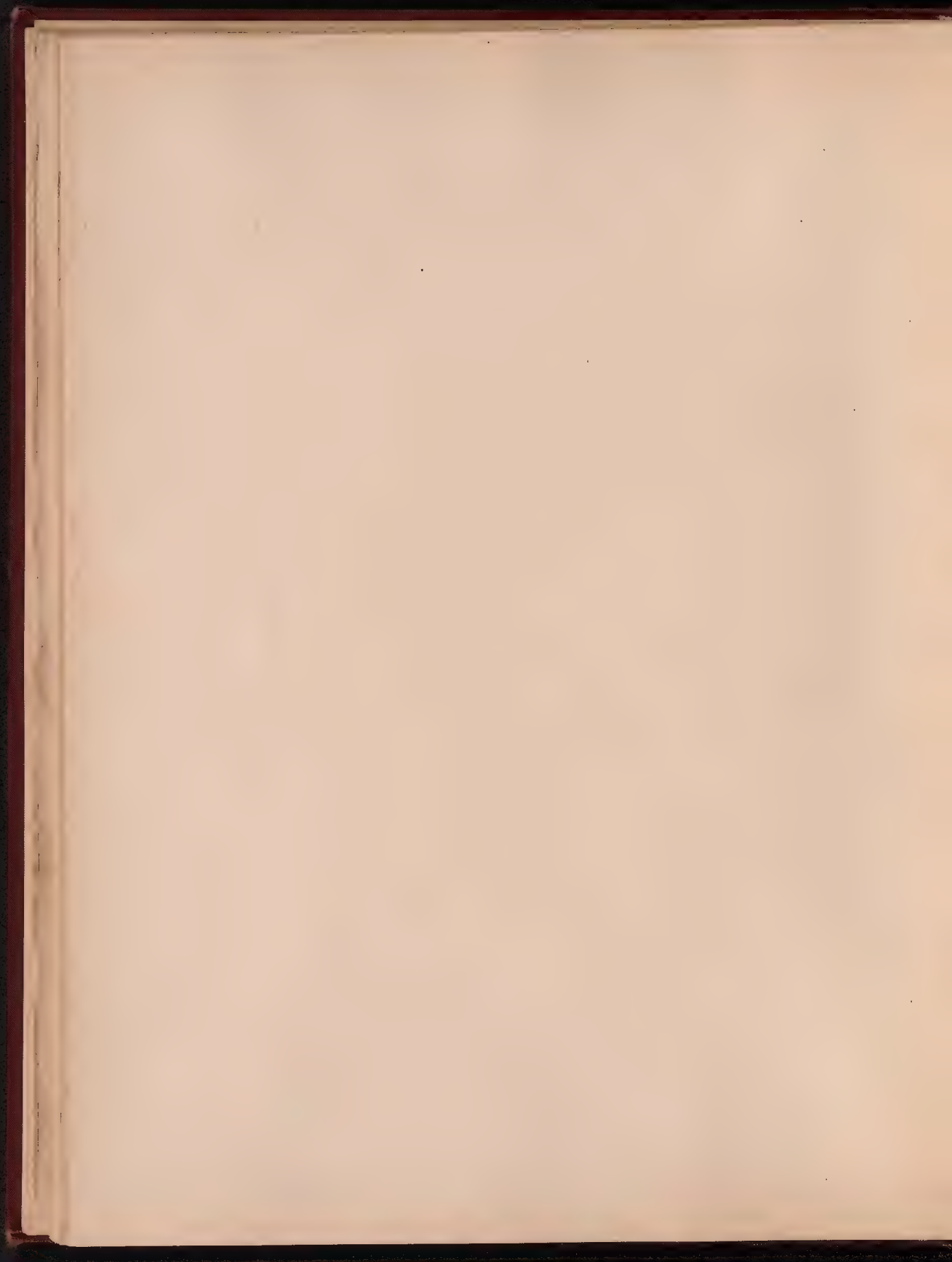


THE THESEUS.

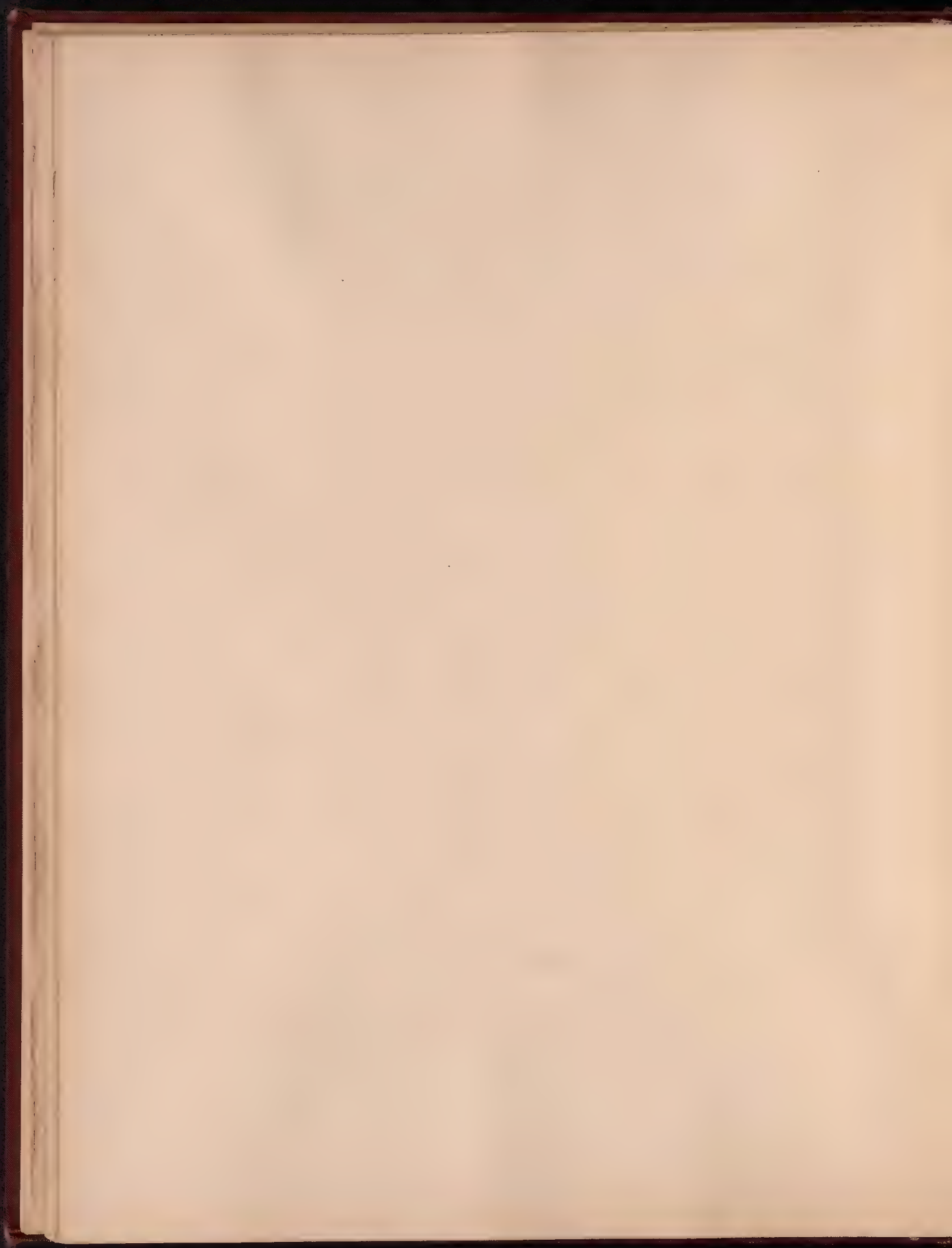
BY PHIDIAS.















## THESEUS.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

**W**HEN, after the splendid victories of Salamis and Platea, Athens rose from her ruins more beautiful than ever, amongst all the great achievements of antiquity no work was ever accomplished that could be compared in beauty and perfection of artistic execution with the Parthenon, dedicated to her divine protectress, Athena, or Minerva, or that magnificent natural pedestal the Acropolis. Even the mutilated remains of these sculptures, which adorned the pediments, exhibit a magnificence of artistic conception surpassing all others, and testify more loudly than history to the greatness of the people.

The advance of plastic art to its utmost height of beauty is inseparably associated with the name of Phidias. Born at Athens, about the year 500 B.C., this greatest sculptor of all ages passed his boyhood and youth amidst the enthusiasm and excitement which reigned in Athens during the great Persian wars. When the monuments of the Acropolis rose once more

from their ashes, it was Phidias who carried Greek art to the height of spiritual beauty, whereas, previous to his time, perfection of physical form had been the principal aim. Professor Westmacott has admirably, yet in the highest terms, summed up the incomparable merit of these remains known as the "Elgin marbles," acquired by the Earl of Elgin when Ambassador for Turkey at the beginning of the present century, and purchased by the nation for £35,000, and, after an expenditure in all of about £74,000, deposited in the Museum.

"They are unquestionably the finest specimens of the art that exist; and they illustrate so fully and so admirably the progress, and it may be said the consummation of sculpture, that it is important their character and peculiar excellence should be understood by those who desire to make themselves acquainted with the true principles of this art. They exhibit in a remarkable degree all the qualities that constitute fine art—truth, beauty, and perfect execution. All that is coarse and vulgar in ordinary nature is omitted, and that only is represented which unites the two essential qualities of truth and beauty. The result of this happy combination is what has been termed ideal beauty. The statues of the Theseus, the Ilissus, or river-god, and the large draped group are all remarkable for the qualities referred to, united with grandeur of style and simplicity. Wherever the nude form is shown, there is the most profound knowledge of its anatomical form and capabilities of action. The draperies likewise are everywhere treated with the greatest skill, and with the most careful attention to effect in opposition to, and contrast with, the nude."

It is difficult to understand as a whole the composition of which these sculptures formed a portion, without reference to "Lucas's Restoration," a model of the Parthenon, which stands beside the sculptures in

the Elgin Room, or to the incomparable work by Professor Michaelis. The figure of Theseus was one of the sculptures of the eastern pediment, in which was represented the Birth of Athene (Minerva).

Between the hour in which Hyperion, the sun, rises from the sea to run his course for the day in his four-horse chariot, and that in which his sister Selene, the moon, descends in her two-horse car into the ocean, Athene, goddess of wisdom and the arts, set free by the axe of Hephæstus (Vulcan), springs full-armed from the head of Zeus, father of gods and men. Demeter, sitting on a low seat, looks on, and hails with uplifted hand the advent of the goddess, while her daughter, Persephone, sits beside her, leaning on her shoulder. The three Fates are present, one reposing in another's lap, and the third seated on a chair by herself. Nikè, the goddess of victory, with outstretched wings, is also there; and on the opposite side, looking towards Hyperion rising in his chariot, Theseus, the Athenian hero, reclines upon a rock, covered with a lion's skin. Iris, the messenger of the gods, speeds away from the scene to herald to the under world the birth of the divine Athene.

The figure of Theseus, with the exception of the hands, feet, and nose, is still preserved in all its magnificence, despite the inexorable power that—in the words of Keats—

“Mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude  
Wasting of old Time.”









THE ILISSUS.

BY PHIDIAS.













## ILISSUS.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

"Thy favour, glorious Athens! to acquire."

ΠΙΝΔΑΡΟΣ.



COMPETITION between Divinities. The competitors, Poseidon (Neptune) and Athenê (Minerva). Prize, the guardianship of Attica. Qualification, the emblematisation of the worthiest gift to humanity. Umpires, local deities, chiefly gods, goddesses, heroes or demi-gods, with their attendants. On the one side are ranged Amphitrite, wife of Poseidon, with Leucothea, Gea and her children, Thalassa and Aphroditê, Galenê, Cephissus, Praxithea, Callirrhoë, and other Powers of the deep; the chariot of Poseidon in readiness. On the other side are gathered Cecrops, founder of Athens, Pandrosos, Hersê, Aglauros, Erisichthon, Ilissus, and a few more of the celestial throng; the car of Athenê, with the charioteer, Nikê Apteros,—wingless, that Victory should not desert the city,—and the equerry, Erichthonius, drawn up in waiting.



The contest begins: all are intent. Presently Poseidon strikes a rock with his long streaming trident. The Horse springs forth; symbol of chivalrous martial enterprise. That is the gift which the ruler of the sea would make to mortal creatures. Now there is breathless expectation: what would Athenê offer? Look! the goddess brandishes her spear—and lo! the Olive appears, springing high into luxuriant life; token of peaceful prosperous industry. That is the benefaction which she would bestow on mankind. There is a momentary lull in the excitement; and now the decision of the arbiters is pronounced. It is unanimously in behalf of Athenê; for surely the arts of thrifty loving peace are to be preferred to the arts of ruthless sanguinary war. And the virgin goddess is declared protectress of "glorious Athens," which thenceforth bears her name. Poseidon naturally chafes at his failure, and that he may be appeased his worship is permitted in the capital of which his antagonist is become the tutelary goddess. Such was the story illustrated in marble on the western gable of the Parthenon; a story as appropriate as artist ever chose to chronicle the history of the building he was called upon to embellish.

It will be seen that the river-god Ilissus (subject of the annexed photograph) occupied a subsidiary rôle; he was not one of the contending parties, though as god of the river Ilissus, which watered the southern plain of Attica, the interest which he may be considered to have taken in the struggle was little short of that felt by Athenê herself. The position of Ilissus in the architectural composition balanced that of Callirrhoë on the side of Poseidon; both were recumbent; both were essential—for Callirrhoë typified Athens' single fountain of sweet water. Ilissus is represented as suddenly elevating

himself from his reclining position: it would be at the most critical moment—when, doubtless, Athenê was on the point of producing her countergift—to behold what should decide the contest.

Though auxiliary, the statue of Ilissus is equal as a specimen of sculpture to any that adorned the pediments of the Hecatompedon. The artist had a difficult task before him—to depict sudden movement in a body at rest, the dead weight of the whole frame thrown on one hand—to show in a recumbent figure the ripple of surface produced by instantaneous muscular exertion. And to do all this whilst keeping strictly within the bounds of faithful transcription of nature, and eliminating from it all that lacked the impress of the beauty and nobleness of masculine vigour. How far the artist—the immortal Phidias—succeeded in his design may be estimated by the copy before us. It has been declared by eminent critics that the figure of Ilissus is superior in boldness and animation to that of Theseus from the eastern pediment. The excellent state in which the back of this figure is preserved—displaying the smoothness of surface peculiar to recently-finished work—is attributed to the protection afforded by the cornice of the tympanum.

It remains to be said of the statue before us, that it has been thought by a few connoisseurs to personify Cephissus, the river flowing on the west side of Athens, and by others, Theseus.









THE MOIRAI, OR FATES.

BY PHIDIAS.







PEDIMENT OF THE PARTHENON  
OF ZEUS







## GROUP OF THE MOIRAI, OR FATES.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

**T**HESE figures, like the Theseus, formed part of the composition of the Eastern Pediment of the Parthenon. They represent the three daughters of Cecrops, Aglauros, Pandrosos, and Herse. One of the sisters reposes in another's lap; and the third, seated by herself, is turning towards the divine messenger proclaiming the birth of Athene. While the composition, as a whole, must have excited surpassing admiration for its great freedom and life, the execution of the separate figures confirms the belief that no plastic work has ever again been executed with such elevated power, and, at the same time, with such grace and beauty. The sensitiveness of the Greek mind to beauty in all its various aspects led to the breaking through of prescriptive forms in expressing it in art,—thus recognizing sculpture as imitative, while with other nations it was considered little else than symbolical; besides, the acute intelligence of the Greek taught him that the art was capable of

improvement from the old standard on which it was founded. Nature was carefully studied and copied; and nature, in these marbles, is united with such grandeur and power that we feel that a race of a higher order, a race of gods, is before us. The undercurrent of life expressed in the graceful play of the drapery of the figures, particularly those of Aglauros and Herse, the great beauty of which rests in the skilfully arranged folds of the garments, displays all the characteristics which mark the School of Phidias as the noblest yet seen; uniting, as it does, largeness and grandeur in the masses with the very highest type of beauty in the forms. These figures are entirely free from the hardness and stiffness of the immediately preceding sculptors, and equally removed from the soft and meretricious qualities which are found in the productions of subsequent schools.



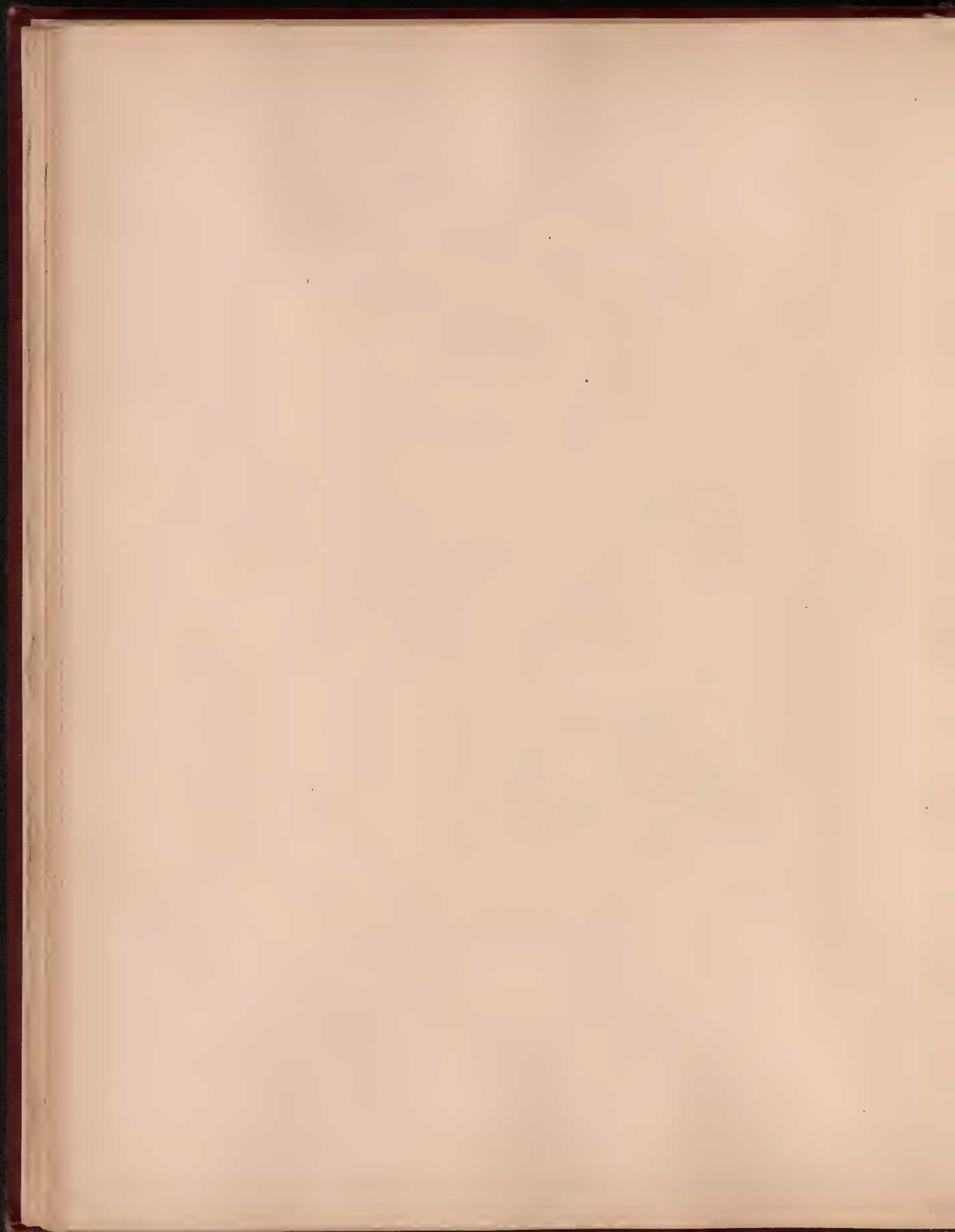


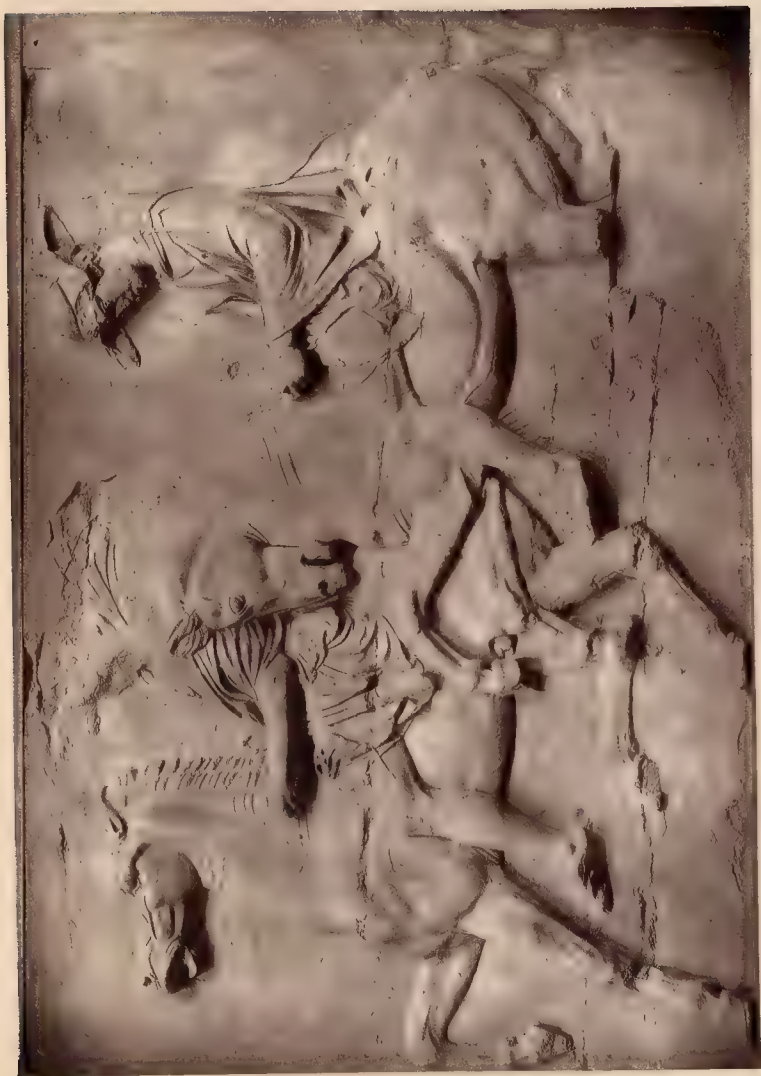


BAS-RELIEF, FROM THE FRIEZE OF THE  
PARTHENON AT ATHENS.

(HORSEMEN WHO HAVE JOINED THE PROCESSION.)














## BAS-RELIEF FROM THE FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

HE Frieze of the Cella, or body of the Parthenon, extended over 524 feet in length, occupying the space immediately below the ceiling of the porticoes of the Temple. What subject more suitable, more adapted to his genius, or more worthy of representation, could Phidias have selected for its adornment than the magnificent procession of all that the first city of Greece possessed of youth, beauty, nobleness, and honour assembled every four years to render homage to the Virgin Goddess Athene? More splendid materials for artistic treatment were never at the disposal of genius than that long Panathenaic procession—the highest festival of the Athenians, both in its religious and political importance—with all its exuberant wealth of beautiful and noble forms, vigorous life, and spirited action; its infinite variety of figure and incident: old

men bearing olive-branches, beautiful maidens carrying holy vessels, aliens bending under the weight of offerings, troops of horsemen reining in impetuous steeds, warriors in chariots armed with lances and bucklers, musicians with flute and cithern, priests, deputations, and offerings for sacrifice—wending its way to the sacred temple on the rocky mount of the Acropolis, backed by Hymettus, and bathed in the clear sunlight of a lovely clime, with blue sky above and blue sea below. Even the remains of this great work affect the senses like music, and like music create a mood in the mind of the spectator. All that could beautify life or render it more noble is there, and there is the charm of a festive joy resting on every figure, as though each bore the reflex of the presence of the gods. When contemplating these fragments of a past world, which a happy chance has driven to our shores, we gain some idea of the conditions under which alone such a work could be produced; the perfectly untrammelled art developed by a people nurtured in freedom, and conspicuous for nobility of manners and cultivation, the familiarity with shapely forms, and that healthy physical life incapable of disturbing sensation, led in the midst of all that is beautiful in nature. Works of art were not then collected merely for pleasure or ostentatious display, but were executed to do honour to the gods, and to express the national and patriotic sentiments of a great people, and to give expression to its religious belief.

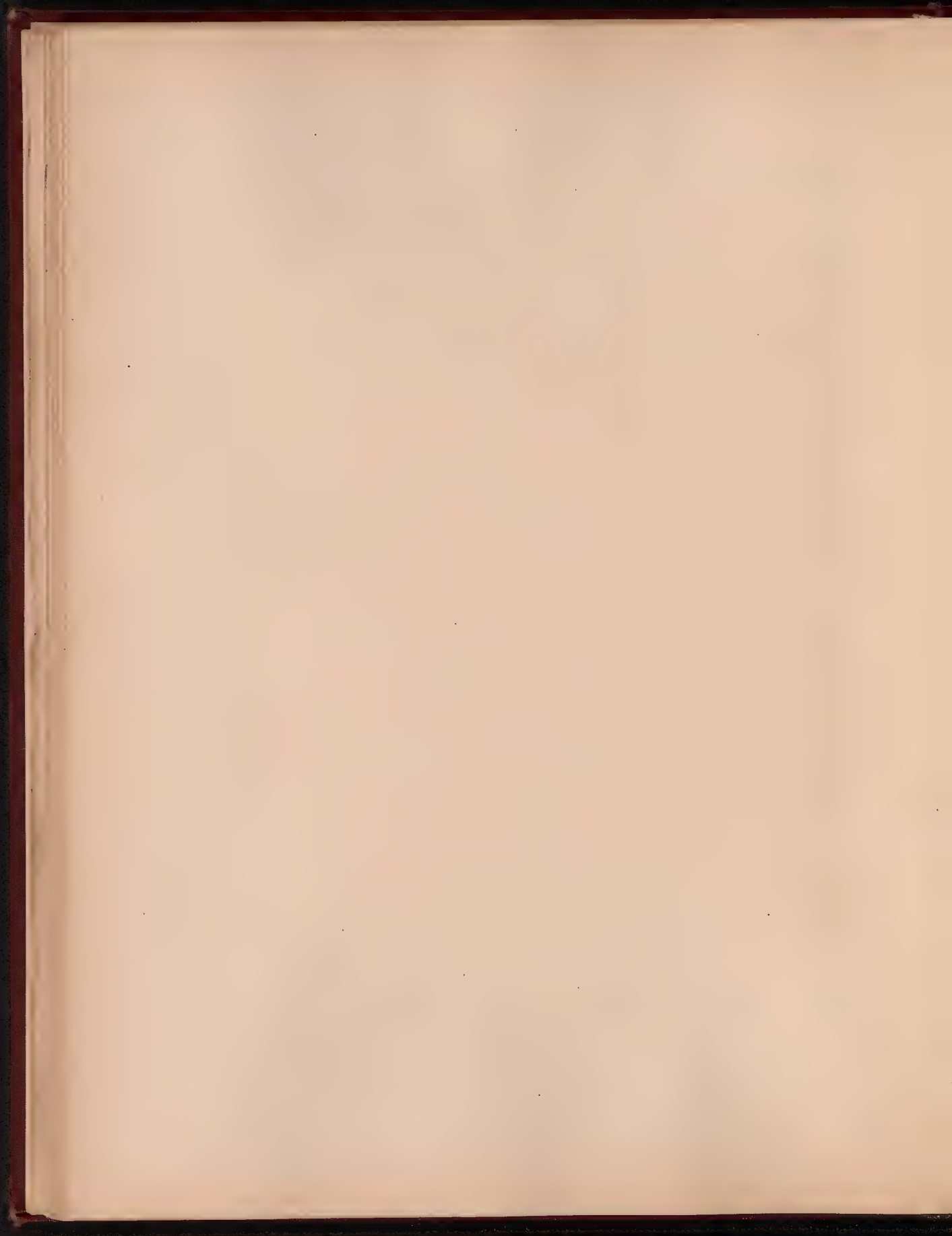




BAS-RELIEF, FROM THE FRIEZE OF THE  
PARTHENON AT ATHENS.

(VICTOR WITH CHARIOT.)













## BAS-RELIEF FROM THE FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

"Like a bannered show's advance,  
While the crowd runs by the way;  
As a happy people come  
When the war has rolled away,  
So came they."



ARRIVED at the Acropolis, the procession divided itself at the South-west angle into two streams, one going round by the north, the other by the south, meeting at the great eastern entrance of the Parthenon. Following the northern stream of the procession the slabs represent it forming; those about to join the procession are depicted as in different stages of preparation, some mounted or hastening on, others bridling and holding back their horses. When the angle of the northern side is reached, a magistrate is represented

marshalling the procession, and thence the sculptor treats the subject on the northern side as the procession formed.

Each slab has a separate subject, and so inexhaustible was the power of the great sculptor that of all the hundreds of figures no two can be pointed out alike. It is unnecessary to do more than call attention to the endless diversity of form and motion, the alternations of quiet grace, of solemn dignity, of vigorous action, and of sparkling life displayed in this most wonderful of all frieze compositions.

Admirable also are the spirited figures of the victors in the games, who, in chariots, head the procession of horsemen. Of the horses Flaxman said, "They appear to live and move, to roll their eyes, to gallop, prance, and curvet; the veins of their faces and legs seem distended with circulation, in them are distinguished the hardness and decision of bony forms, from the elasticity of tendon and the softness of flesh. The beholder is charmed with the deer-like lightness and elegance of their make; and, although the relief is not above an inch from the background and they are so much smaller than nature, we can scarcely suffer reason to persuade us that they are not alive."







BAS-RELIEF, FROM THE FRIEZE OF THE  
PARTHENON AT ATHENS.

(OFFICERS OF THE PRIESTHOOD CONDUCTING CATTLE TO SACRIFICE.)













## BAS-RELIEF FROM THE FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

"Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?"

KEATS.

**N**EARLY one-half of the total length of the Frieze (524 feet) is in the possession of the British Museum, and casts have been added of nearly all the remainder. Originally the Panatheneia, which the Frieze depicts, was confined to festive games; subsequently the gymnastic games were added under the Pisistratidæ, great reforms introduced, and the Rhapsodes and their art adopted. Afterwards the celebration of the festival was combined with that of the anniversary of the tyrant's death, and of the memorable deed

of Harmodius and Aristogiton. New festivities were added, and, finally, Pericles on founding the New Parthenon introduced the competitive production of musical performances. The festival embraced six days' solemnities, that the civic body of each class might participate. Every freeborn inhabitant of Attica was entitled to assist at the festival. The slabs represent the components of the festive procession which took place at the close of the festival. In this procession the whole mass of the people assisted, and conveyed in solemn form the *peplus*, or sacred veil—which had been previously worked in the Acropolis by young virgins selected from the best families in Athens—to the Temple of Athenê Polias. The strength and extent of the State's dominion was manifested in the procession; for the citizens were followed by the aliens resident in Attica under the protection of the State, who had to undertake the performance of certain services, bearing sun-shades, pitchers, &c., while all the colonies of Athens were represented by deputations, whose duty it was to offer sheep and cattle to the goddess.





THE BRONZE HEAD OF "APHRODITE."









THE DISCOBOLUS.

·BY MYRON.


















## THE BRONZE HEAD OF "APHRODITE."

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

 HIS beautiful head has doubtless formed part of a heroic statue about nine feet in length. Mr. C. T. Newton considers it the finest example of bronze statuary on a large scale which we may venture to assign with confidence to the best period of Greek art. The style throughout has that largeness and simplicity which is characteristic of the best age of Athenian art which we have as yet been able to study only in marble. It was the gem of the Castellani collection, purchased in 1873, its separate value being estimated at about £10,000. Evidently of an ideal type, it has an illumination in its features which transcends all the expression of mortals.

The back of the head and neck have been torn away, and a blow has crushed the metal and one side of the forehead. The eyes, which have been formed of precious stones, have perished, and are only represented by hollow sockets. A fillet in which have been inserted ornaments at intervals encircles the head. In the front view, the two sides of the face

do not agree, the right cheek is too full, and the left too flat in outline, and the whole face is out of drawing. This want of symmetry may have been calculated by the sculptor for a particular point of view for which the statue was designed. But it is more probable, in Mr. Newton's opinion, that the violence to which it has been subjected has distorted the metal, which in most part of the casting is extremely thin. This obliquity hardly affects the beauty of the face, except in the front view, and since the alteration in the pose of the head on its pedestal, which was previously more upturned—an improvement effected at a special consultation held with Messrs. G. F. Watts, J. E. Millais, F. Leighton, and J. Foley, Royal Academicians—it still less detracts from its beauty. The lips, slightly parted, seem to breathe, the nose, like that of some of Da Vinci's ideal types, is rather broad between the eyes, the forehead low, but not wanting in majesty, the hair flowing in deeply channelled curves. The same authority (Mr. Newton) has thought that, though called Aphrodite, the expression would better accord with that of a Victory. It is said to have been found in Thessaly, but no particulars have been published.







A M A Z O N.













## AMAZON.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.



HE accompaniments of this beautiful statue clearly denote the subject, uncertain at first if we regard only the figure. Like Diana and her nymphs she carries the quiver suspended at her girdle, and wears a high tunic left uncovered at the breast and left shoulder; but the helmet, battle-axe, the two-edged sword, the strap on the left foot for the single spur used when riding, are all attributes of an Amazon, one of the daughters of Mars who lived near the river Thermodon, in Cappadocia. The pose of the figure, the elevation of the right arm and the lowering of the left, indicates the action that follows from the bending of a bow. But this is not sufficiently indicated to determine precisely if that has been the action.

At this point our knowledge of the subject represented long rested, until Signor Visconti came to the rescue, and by an ingenious train of reasoning demonstrated the real character of the statue intended by the

sculptor. "The accessories," says Visconti, "are all too ambiguous for those of a warrior prepared for the combat, the casque should cover the head, the arms should not rest at the feet, the quiver should not be closed." He then refers to the testimony of Pliny and Pausanias that many bronze statues of Amazons ornamented the famous temple of Diana of Ephesus, which had been placed there because that sacred place served as a refuge or sanctuary after the battle in which they were vanquished by Bacchus. Among these statues, of which the temple was a kind of exhibition for the *élite* of the Greek artists, there were five distinguished as more perfect than all the others, though with different degrees of excellence. We know that in *bronze* Polycletus had attained the first rank, but we are ignorant in what attitude his statue was figured, and the pose of two other sculptors, Cydon and Phradmon, is equally unknown. The Amazon of Phidias, which was the second in merit, was represented leaning upon a pikestaff. The third work, by Ctesilas, illustrated an Amazon wounded. Without doubt, these masterpieces were often copied, and many of the statues of wounded Amazons that have come down to us may be considered as imitations of that of Ctesilas. There are none existing of that of Phidias, but of those discovered, the multiplicity of copies attests the esteem in which the ancients held the originals. It is thus probable that this statue presents a repetition of the Amazon by Polycletus, since that of Phidias was in a different attitude, and in effect the action of unbending the bow after having deposited the weapons at her feet, by an analogy evidently agrees with the two other statues, and perfectly conveys the idea of representing vanquished warriors seeking an asylum in the temple of Diana.

This statue is superior to all others offering a representation of the

subject, and may be placed in some aspects among the most beautiful that have come down from antiquity. The head, despite the disfigurement from the manner in which it has been rejoined, is remarkable for its nobleness. The purity of the features, bearing a kind of austerity well befitting a female warrior, the hair put up and knotted behind the neck with a simplicity untamed, intensify the fine effect already produced. The tunic gracefully disposed, forms, by the multiplicity of its small folds very delicately chiselled, a piquant contrast with the character displayed by the parts of the form left undraped. Everywhere we remark an execution firm yet soft, and everywhere we recognize the hand of a great master. This perfection of work creates a more lively regret that the *chef-d'œuvre*, so mutilated by time, has been yet more so by the most reckless restoration. Saying nothing of the arms, which have been treated passably enough, the right leg is a shapeless mass which recalls the most barbarous Gothic. The nose, and part of the chin, are equally modern additions made with the greatest want of skill. In short, the extreme negligence with which, in past times, all the great works of antiquity were treated is ever a matter of astonishment.

From an antique inscription engraved on the plinth we learn that this statue had formerly been placed in *la salle du collège de médecins*. It is couched in these terms: *Translata de Schola Medicorum*, and the characters of which it is composed belong not to the time of the decadence of the arts. By such a conclusion we prove the value that was attached to the statue, if it was adjudged important to transmit to posterity the memory of its displacement.







THE VENUS OF MELOS.













## THE VENUS OF MELOS.

IN THE LOUVRE, PARIS.

**T**HIS masterpiece was discovered in 1820 by a Greek peasant named Georges while digging in his garden in the Island of Melos. It was found but a few feet beneath the level of the soil, and when the earth was cleared away, the statue, separated into two blocks, was discovered amidst a number of inscriptions, and other fragments of marble.

This is the only statue of Venus that has come down to us that represents the *goddess*, and not merely a beautiful woman. The power and grandeur of form, over which the infinite charm of youth and beauty is diffused, are in harmony with the pure and majestic expression of the head, which, free from human infirmity, proclaims the calm self-sufficiency of divinity. The magnificence of this work, which, in spite of its excellence, was in no wise famed among the ancients, allows us to infer to some extent what must have been the beauty of those vanished creations which excited the admiration of all antiquity. We are far from assuming it to

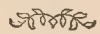
be a copy of the Venus of Alcamenes, but it may be referred to here, because it affords an approximate idea of the types of this epoch. In the Venus of Alcamenes, which carried off the palm in the competition with Agoracritus, and which stood in the temple of the goddess situate in the gardens outside the eastern wall of Athens, the sculptor nearly approached the majesty of Phidias: and in the type of goddess, there was at the same time a grace, and, with all its loveliness and tender sweetness, a truly divine and ideal expression, which we can best realize in the famous Venus of Melos.





M E N A N D E R.

BY CEPHISODITUS.













## MENANDER.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.



MENANDER was a celebrated master of Greek comedy, instructed by Theophrastus. He was so highly esteemed by the Athenians that they distinguished him by the title of Prince of New Comedy. Of the one hundred and eight comedies written by him nothing remains but a few fragments. It is said that these comedies were translated by Terence, who was a great admirer of the poet, and their loss is the more to be deplored when we remember that the graceful Terence was considered by his countrymen inferior to Menander. The writings of Menander are well described as marked by elegance, refined wit, and judicious observations, and as not disfigured, like the compositions of Aristophanes, by mean and indecent reflections and illiberal satire.

Menander was born at Athens in the third year of the 189th Olympiad, dying, B.C. 293; he therefore must have flourished but a generation later than Praxiteles, by whose son, Cephisodotus, the original

statue was executed. Like the statue of Posidippus (which appears in the following pages) it is seated, and both are carefully dressed. Visconti supposes Menander to be attired in the Macedonian costume, with tunic and sandals. Both statues were placed at the entrance of the theatre at Athens, or in the Acropolis; they are sculptured from Pentelic marble. The quality of the marble, the dimensions, the chair, the costume, all are the same in both monuments; "and," remarks Visconti, "the chin without beard is a proof that the subjects represented were not before the time of Alexander." Time has destroyed that part of the plinth upon which the name was engraved, but the discovery, however, of a bas-relief in the Farnese Collection closely resembling that of the statue, and which was found after a more critical examination to fully confirm the first impression of identity, determined the character of the subject represented, as the head bore the name of Menander.

The statue is admirable in the naturalness of the treatment, the attitude full of elegance, the drapery noble, and everywhere full of spirit and intelligence—the perfect taste of a great master. These statues, Menander and Posidippus, have been considered by many to be original works, but however good in conception, the execution—though superior in this one to that of its companion statue of Posidippus—is not without a certain heaviness and feebleness in some parts, which reveal the hand of a copyist. The right foot and left hand are modern.







POSEIDIPPOS.

BY CEPHISODITUS.













## POSEIDIPPOS.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.



HIS is the companion statue to that of Menander, representing Posidippus, another master of Greek Comedy, successor to Menander, and one who most successfully followed in the same path. Posidippus repaired to Athens after the death of Menander," and became greatly distinguished by his compositions. The name given to this statue is further authenticated by being engraved on the plinth in Greek characters, ΠΟΣΕΙΔΙΠΠΟΣ. These statues are undoubtedly the finest in existence relating to Comedy, and are also remarkable for their good preservation, and excellent style of sculpture. Were they really what they have been supposed to be, *i.e.* *original* works of Cephisodotus, one of the two sons of Praxiteles, we have then two almost perfect examples of that period of Greek art inaugurated by one of the greatest sculptors of antiquity after Phidias. But the accomplished critic Visconti has declared that it is impossible to cherish the illusion that in these works we possess the originals which stood in the most famous theatre in Greece, or that they are anything

more than copies of great originals. The execution is so inferior to the conception that, the head excepted, which has been executed with great care, all the rest forbids such belief.

Posidippus was born at Cassandria, a town in Macedonia. He flourished under the successor of Alexander, and the fragments of his works, remarkable for elegance of style and morality of thought, justify the eulogiums antiquity bestowed upon him. He sits in one of those semicircular chairs often represented in statues of men of letters. The attitude, and the expression of his face announce deep meditation. While Menander is attired in Macedonian costume, the dress of Posidippus presents us with a faithful picture of Athenian costume, with the Greek tunic, the *pallium quadratum*, finger-ring, and half-leg buskins. The form of the chairs, the marks of *meniscos*—a kind of glory disc to save them from the injuries of time, as well as of birds—and the bronze traces of plates on the legs to protect them from the crowding of the people, all prove that these statues were placed at the entrance of the theatre at Athens, and a passage in Pausanias also points to this conclusion. He speaks of the enclosure being full of statues of the most distinguished tragic and comic poets, but that he had also seen amongst them some which he was astonished to see sharing this honour with Sophocles and Menander.

Both statues were found in a round hall of the *Thermæ* of Olympiades on the *Viminal Hill*.





THE HEAD OF ASKLEPIOS.













## THE HEAD OF ASKLEPIOS (AESCULAPIUS).

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.



HIS head is considered to be the work of a sculptor of the Macedonian period, about B.C. 300. It was found in the Island of Melos, which during the Peloponnesian War was occupied by a colony from Athens. Well known for its architectural remains, it is also famous for the specimens of ancient sculpture which have been discovered at various times, such as the Venus de Milo in the Louvre. This classical head was found in a kind of grotto in the island, a part of the torso of the statue to which it belonged, about nine feet high, having been discovered at the same time, with votive tablets and fragments of statuettes. After passing from the possession of the French Vice-Consul in Melos, it formed part of the celebrated Blacas Collection acquired by the British Museum in 1866.

The head—which has been coloured—is composed of three pieces of marble. A bronze wreath formerly decorated the hair. Mr. C. T. Newton, the Keeper of the Greek Antiquities, considers this head “a very noble specimen of Greek sculpture,” and describes the execution as distinguished for freedom and breadth, and as belonging to a period when the Greek sculptor had attained a perfect mastery over marble, and knew how to produce striking effects by combining refined elaboration of the more important features with a bold and sketchy treatment of subordinate details.

We may perhaps regard this, the most beautiful of the *Æsculapius* heads found at Melos, as a free copy of the type created by Alcámenes, the pupil of Phidias, for in the form of the head, and the execution of the hair and beard, we perceive an unmistakable affinity with the idea of Phidias’ Jupiter, only that here the sublime character of a god is exchanged for something more human and kindly, in harmony with the attributes of *Æsculapius*.







THE APOXYOMENOS, OR ATHLETE.

AFTER LYSIPPUS.













## THE APOXYOMENOS, OR ATHLETE.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.



HIS is a repetition, in marble, of the famous bronze statue by *Lysippus*, the sculptor who may be said to have completed the progressive course of sculpture. It has been brought forward as a merit that *Lysippus* introduced a new and more effective treatment of the human figure, by making the proportion on the whole more light and slender, the limbs more refined, and the head smaller. He bestowed great care on completion and finish, and in working the hair. His works display a quality which Pliny describes by the word *symmetria*, and he appears to have entirely got rid of a certain squareness observable in the more ancient school. The artistic spirit in which *Lysippus* worked, he himself defined in saying "that they, *i.e.* the older artists, made men as they were, but that he represented them as they seemed to be." "A valuable rule if carried out with judgment," said Westmacott.

This indicates a working for refinement of effect, without, however, any sacrifice of truth and correctness of detail, founded upon the close observation of the perspective appearance of figures. Lysippus meant that he preferred breadth and freedom in his art, such as nature viewed generally exhibits, to the representation of such minute details as would tend to destroy the large and grand effect that sculpture should have. To do this satisfactorily, uniting the necessary attention to characteristic details with that generalization which constitutes a fine style, requires the ability of a great artist, and Lysippus thus claims the honour of having reached the fullest development of his art.

This would seem to imply a superiority in the work of Lysippus over that both of Phidias and Praxiteles, and would be too strong a claim when the great works of his predecessors are considered; but however difficult it may be to explain in words the peculiarities which constitute *style* in art, the difference does exist, and will be easily understood by those who can critically examine, and compare good illustrative works of different schools.

The discovery of this excellent marble copy of the famous *Apoxyomenos*, a semi-heroic statue standing in the act of cleaning his arm from the perspiration and dust with the strigil used in the circus for that purpose, enables us to form an idea of this refinement of form, increased by the animation and rhythm displayed in the athlete. It is full of life; the youthful head with its freely flowing hair, the slender and compact growth of the athletic frame, the elastic movement of the finely-formed limbs—all this, as seen in this beautiful statue, conveys an impression of the elegance which marked the figures of Lysippus.

The original which Agrippa placed in front of his *Thermae*, and

therefore in the vicinity of the Pantheon, was so popular that when Tiberius removed it to his own palace, the resentment displayed by the people was so great that he was compelled to restore it to its former site. It was found in 1849, in the *Vicolo della Palme in Trastevere*.







THE APOLLO BELVEDERE.













## THE APOLLO BELVEDERE.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.

"Or view the lord of the unerring bow,  
The god of life, and poesy, and light,  
The sun in human limbs array'd, and brow  
All radiant from his triumph in the fight ;  
The shaft hath just been shot, the arrow bright  
With an immortal's vengeance ; in his eye  
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might,  
And majesty, flash their full lightnings by  
Developing in that one glance the Deity."

CHILDE HAROLD.

**T**HE above lines formerly embodied the universally accepted idea with regard to this celebrated masterpiece of antiquity, but modern criticism furnishes another explanation of the action represented. So much has been written in its praise, that it is needless to pursue that part of the subject. It was supposed to represent the handsomest of the gods in the attitude either of having just slain the serpent Python, or taken revenge on the

sons of Niobe. It has all the grace and dignity which should characterize a god. The position of the right arm was believed to denote that the fatal arrow has been already despatched, whilst he grasps with the left hand the bow. As the Venus de' Medici in the Gallery of the Uffizi at Florence was considered the most perfect model of female beauty, so this statue was deemed the most perfect example of manly beauty. Everything harmonizes with the grace and lightness of the person, and that ideal beauty sung by the poet,

"in his delicate form—a dream of Love  
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast  
Long'd for a deathless lover from above,  
And madden'd in that vision—are exprest."

Discovered towards the end of the fifteenth century among the ruins of Antium, where formerly stood a residence of the Roman Emperors, it was purchased by Julius II. while yet a cardinal, and on his elevation transferred to the Vatican, where for nearly four centuries it has formed one of the greatest attractions.

The only defect observed in the statue is the unnatural length of the legs, compensated for by the greater resulting swiftness, which may be considered an attribute of such a deity. Both the arms were restored by a pupil of Michael Angelo.

It was supposed to have been originally brought from Greece by Nero, along with the Gladiator of the Villa Borghese and the five hundred bronze statues which were carried away from the temple dedicated to Apollo at Delphi.

It has since been incontestably proved that the marble of which it



is formed has been drawn from one of the Italian quarries, and that its execution must therefore be posterior to the age of Alexander, when the Greeks were closely allied with the Romans. It was made, without doubt, like many others, by Greek artists working for Roman masters; a perfect imitation of some work more ancient.

The discovery and study of a bronze statuette (found at Parameythia, 1792) in the possession of Count Stroganoff, at St. Petersburg, afforded the key to the origin of this great work, and dispelled the erroneous ideas that had prevailed regarding it. This statuette so agrees in all essential points with the marble statue, that they must both have been executed after the same original. The statuette allows no doubt of the fact that a bow in the hand of the god is no longer to be thought of, but that he held the *ægis* with the *gorgoneia* in the act of putting to flight a fatal enemy.

In 280 B.C. the Gauls invaded Northern Greece, and threatened to plunder the shrine of Apollo at Delphi, but were decisively defeated. During the battle, a mighty tempest arose, accompanied by thunder and lightning, but in the storm the radiant form of Apollo was seen descending into his temple attended by two goddesses, Diana and Minerva, and the enemy, stricken with fear and terror, took to immediate flight. So runs the legend, and according to an old and beautiful custom the victors raised statues of the gods in gratitude for the victory.

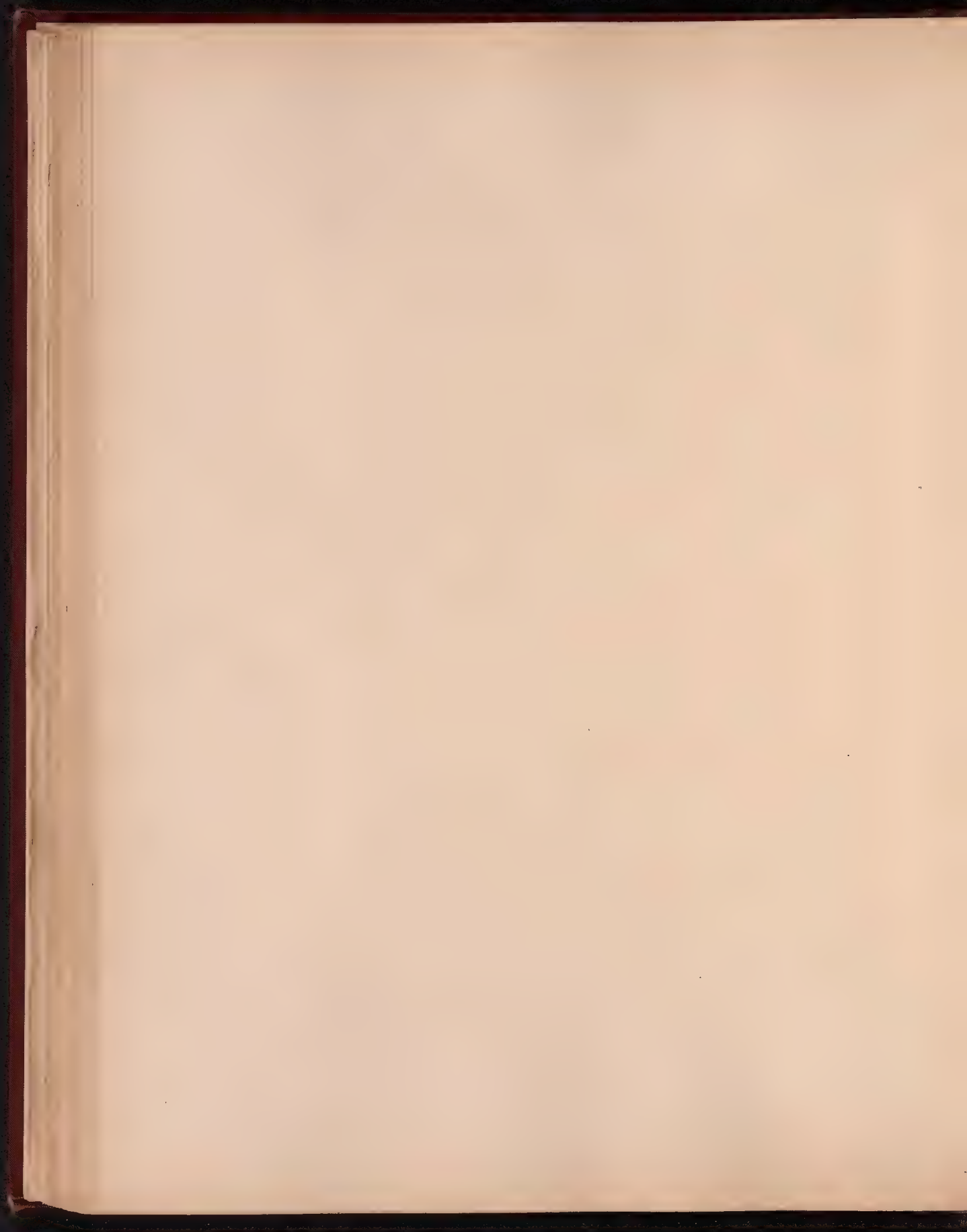
Connected with these events may be placed the origin of one of the most remarkable statues of antiquity, the key to which has been afforded by this discovery. The Dying Gaul, an original work of the Pergamis School, is also another of these commemorative works. But

the monuments of Pergamis were not the only works called forth by the victories over the Gauls in Greece: the Ætolians erected a group at Delphi; the Phocians likewise dedicated a statue to Aleximachus, who had signalized himself in the contest, and had met his death in battle; a statue of Apollo was erected by the Patræans in the market-place of their city out of the spoils of victory; and once more, as in the grand old times, a sacred enthusiasm was kindled throughout Hellas, and found expression not only in the votive offerings, but in the establishment of public feasts and games.

The *ægis* with the Medusa head is, however, the symbol of storm and tempest; the sight of it had a paralyzing and even petrifying effect, and as such it is the attribute of Jupiter and Minerva. But Apollo also used it occasionally, as we find in Homer ("Iliad," xv. 318 *et seq.*), when with the *ægis* lent him by Jupiter he puts to flight the hosts of the Achæans; and again in Sophocles. These scenes were first thought of in the explanation of Apollo as the bearer of the *ægis*, and it was Ludwig Preller who first pointed out the true interpretation by suggesting the battles with the Gauls before Delphi. Not until this did we understand the Apollo Belvedere. In unveiled beauty we see the elegant form and slender figure, the left shoulder only being covered by the chlamys which falls down over the arm, which, far outstretched, holds the *ægis* with its Medusa head. The right arm is slightly turned aside, but both hands have been unskilfully restored. The attitude of the god is full of pathos, and is conceived at a dramatic moment. Ardently excited, and filled with divine anger, with which is mingled a touch of triumphant scorn, the intellectual head is turned sideways, while the figure with elastic step is hastening forward. The

eye seems to dart forth lightning, there is an expression of contempt in the corners of the mouth, and the distended nostrils seem to breathe forth the wrath divine. The smooth sharpness of the form, which rivals the lustrous effect of metal, and the finely cut folds of the slight chlamys, indicate a bronze original as distinctly as does the stem of the tree. This copy is doubtless the intelligent and masterly work of a Greek artist of the early imperial period. That there were other copies of the work is proved by the marble head in the Museum at Basle, but the sculptor of the Apollo Belvedere remains unsurpassed in the expression of intellectual power and subjective excitement. All the copies may undoubtedly be traced to one original, and this original we may assuredly seek among the statues which were executed as votive offerings in the year 279 B.C. in memory of the defeat of the Gauls.



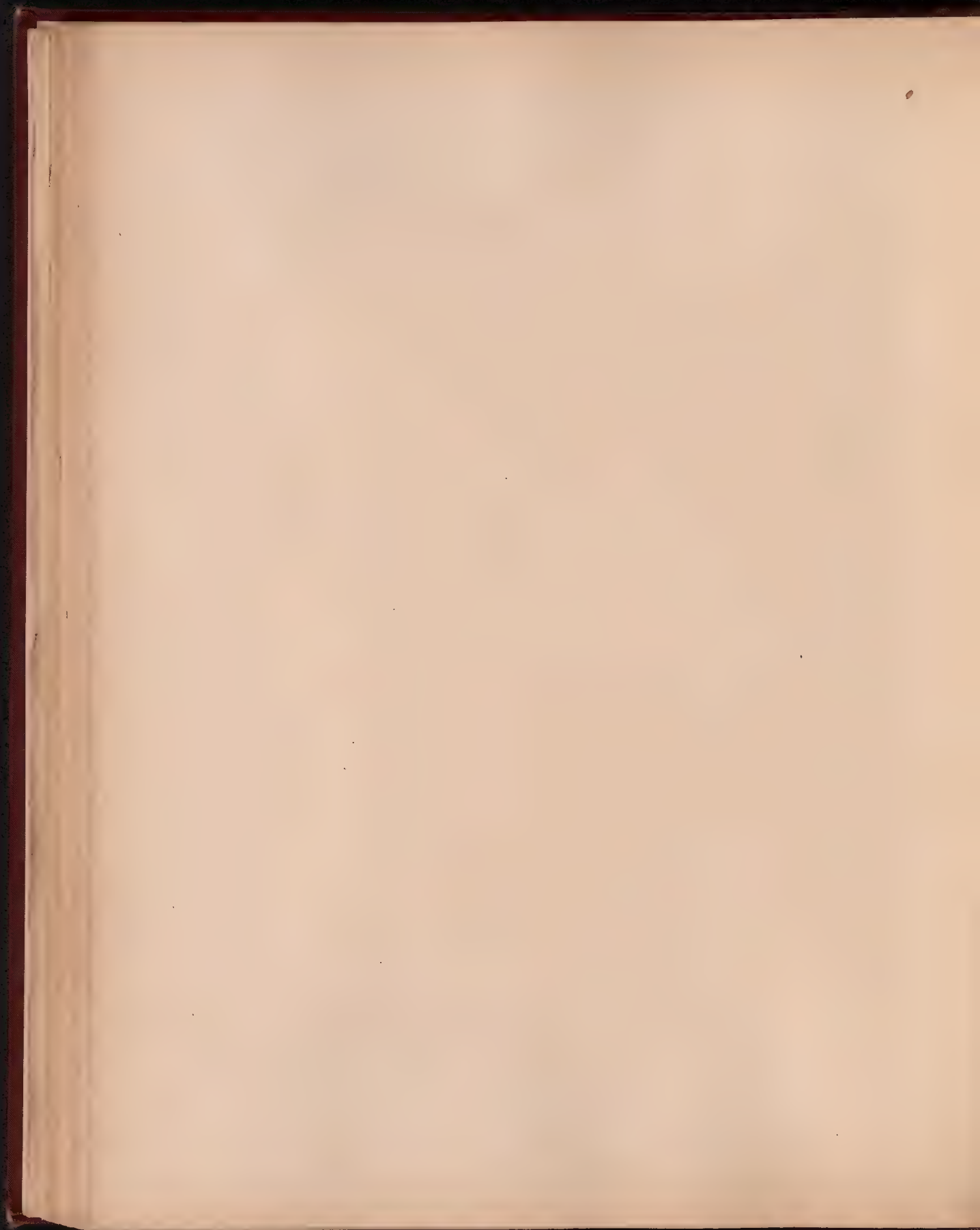




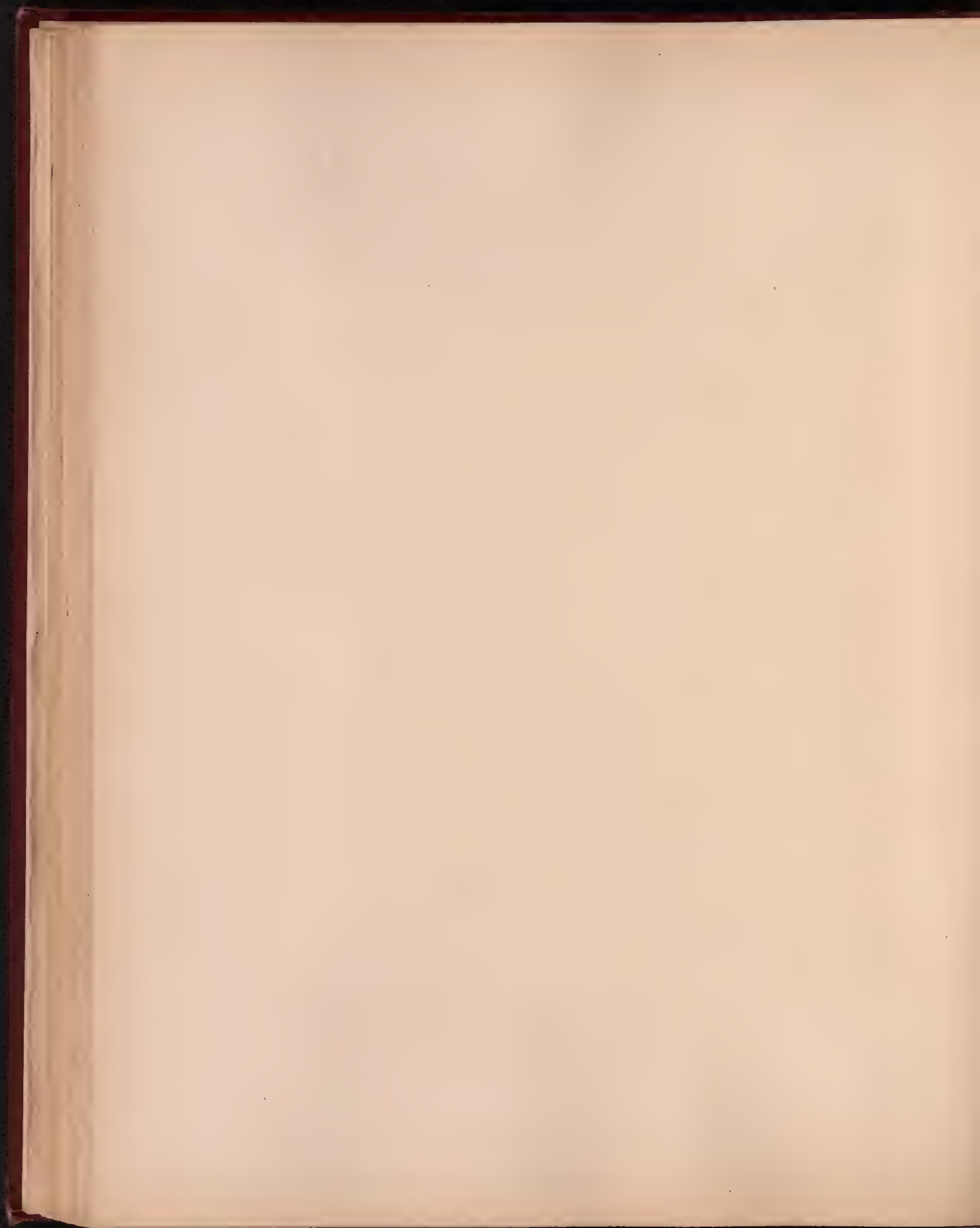
THE MERCURY BELVEDERE.













## THE MERCURY BELVEDERE.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.

**A**FTER being in turn regarded as the youthful Hercules, Theseus, or Antinous, the favourite of Hadrian, this beautiful example of Greek sculpture was proved by Visconti to be really Mercury, the Messenger of the Gods, and the inventor of the Paëstrie games. It is curious to observe upon what vague grounds names were given to many of the recovered masterpieces of antiquity. Antinous was the name which this statue bore almost down to our own day, although surrounded by numerous portraits of the Bithynian celebrity, the simple aspect of any of which was sufficient to destroy such an erroneous conception. Winckelmann, strange to say, saw in it a Meleager; Visconti, more happy in his researches, because resting on a science more profound, reversed all these hypotheses, and showed that the statue represented a god, and that god, Mercury.

The aspect presented by this statue produces impressions somewhat

opposed to each other. It is not always easy to harmonize a certain softness with a form in which the articulations are so strong, and in which the muscles are so pronounced, while the fleshy parts are treated with too much delicacy. Altogether, the ease and abandon thrown into the attitude indicate a nature possessing all the characteristics of power, but effeminate by long repose. The torso is admirable in its undulating lines, and the delicacy of the contours, and by all that happy accord which governs the whole. Though the head is disproportionately small for the body, and the eyes approach too closely to each other, its ideality is sublime, and the expression almost celestial. It was by these traits—the calm, meditative features full of youth and beauty, the roundness and lightness of the limbs, and that indescribable *mélange* of delicacy and vigour—that Visconti was led to his conclusions.

This opinion was confirmed by a study of the busts and statues which represent the god, and especially that of a bronze statue in the Farnese Collection, as well as from the consideration of a trunk of a palm-tree against which the present statue stands, since this god was the first who used the leaves of the tree as material for writing upon. The left hand and right arm—which doubtless supported the symbol of his power and office—are wanting. The drapery is entwined, and thrown over the left shoulder, indicative of the celerity with which he executed the orders of Jupiter; the head is bent slightly forward, as receiving the prayers and supplications of mortals. In all the superior parts it sustains its high reputation as a *chef-d'œuvre*, which led Paul III. to place it beside the Laocoon and the Apollo Belvedere.

But M. De Saint Victor, who devoted much attention to the study of this statue, pointed out many faults in it, although its beauties have



been consecrated by the unanimous suffrages of centuries. "Admirable as it is," he says, "in many points, it must descend a little from the rank in which it has been placed, and works which hitherto have not been thought worthy to compare with it, may be considered in some aspects its superior." "We observe," he continues, "in the lower parts of this antique, not only that they are far from equal to the beauty of the torso and the head, but that they possess in their *ensemble* a weakness and inaccuracy inconceivable when we regard the sentiment and science, certainly the possession of the artist who executed the statue. We know the barbarous restoration which has destroyed the equilibrium of the right leg, and which therefore must not be imputed to the sculptor." The curve of the left thigh, the clumsiness of the knee, the defective joining which gives it a wrong direction, were all matters upon which he indulged in the gravest strictures. He pointed out that the inside ankle-bone of the same leg was much too low, while, by a singular contrast, the corresponding ankle-bone of the right leg is found placed a little too high,—“the feet are thick, and the toes have not the purity of form and movement that they should have, and altogether the work of the chisel, except in the torso and upper portion of the figure, is sometimes weak, and above all inelegant and *négligé*.”

Domenichino and Poussin were said to have made this statue an object of special study, and the last-named considered it one which above all others exhibited the true symmetrical proportions of the human figure.

It may be interesting to compare it with the youthful Mercury from the Farnese Palace, belonging to the ex-King of Naples, now in the British Museum. It has the wings to his feet called *talaria*,

presented by Jupiter, whose especial messenger he was. No other example of this statue has the attributes of Mercury so complete as that in the British Museum. The Roman merchants annually celebrated a festival on the 15th of May, to the honour of Mercury, in a temple by the Circus Maximus. Sacrifices were offered, and prayers for forgiveness of any falsity, chicanery, and fraudulent measures they had employed in the pursuit of gain.

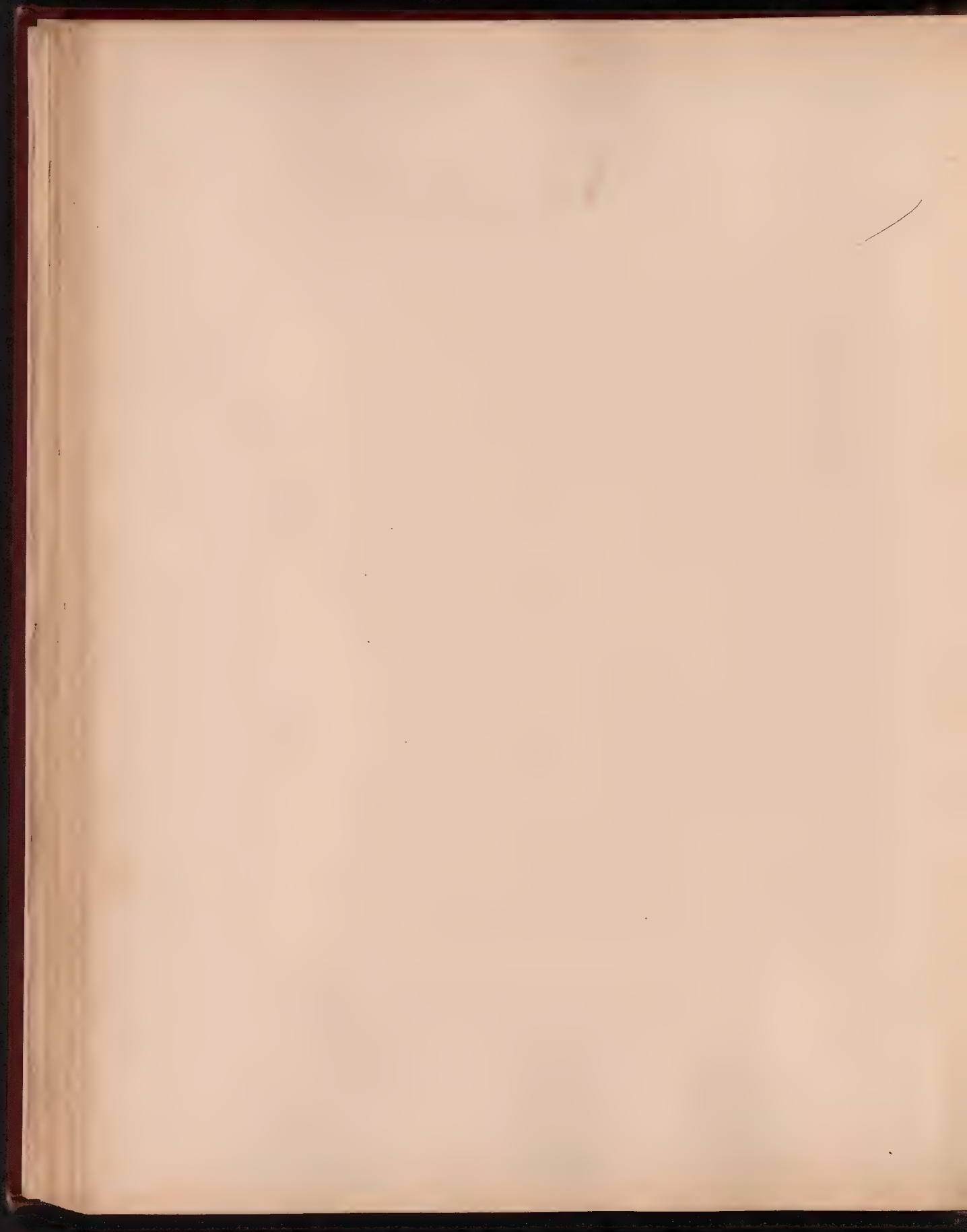
The Mercury of Belvedere is sculptured in Parian marble, and was discovered near the church of *S. Martino di Monti*, by the Baths of Titus, on the Esquiline Hill, during the pontificate of Paul III.





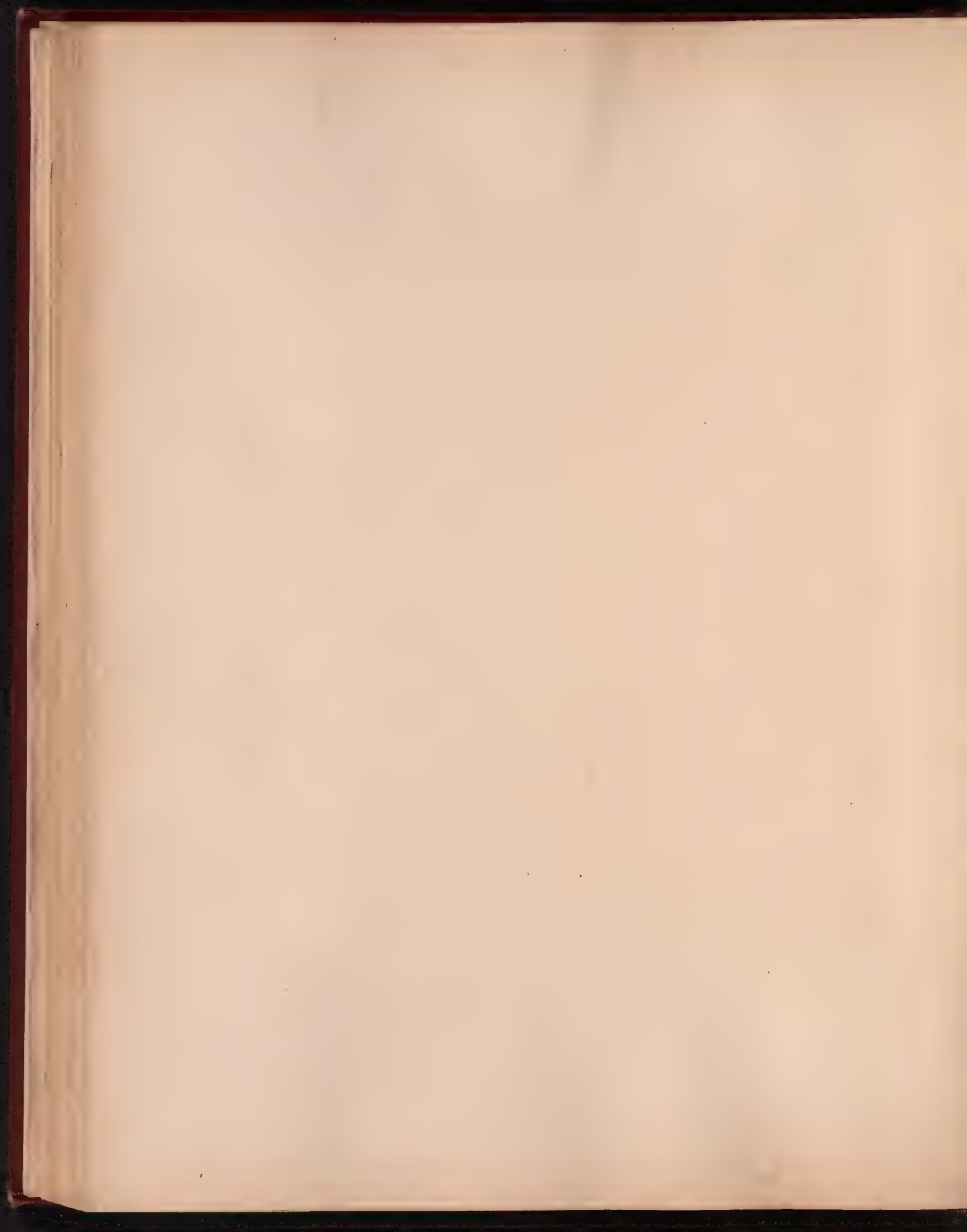
THE MELEAGER.













## THE MELEAGER.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.

**F**EW incidents are more famous in mythological history than the hunting of the Calydonian boar. The hero of that story may be here admired in all the splendour of physical beauty, though the figure wants the left arm. He is represented in a noble attitude, leaning on his lance, of which there yet rest traces on the plinth, and which was doubtless the instrument of his victory. At his feet, on the left, lies the frightful head of the Calydonian boar, while his faithful dog stands beside him on the right side. The countenance of the young hero is very fine, and expresses the exultation he feels at his victory over the terrible enemy which had laid waste all the country, and been deemed invincible on account of its vast size. The graceful drapery scarcely covers the breast, and passing over the shoulders is twisted round the left forearm. The most exquisite surface-execution of the marble, which is of that variety known as *imezio*, is another of its characteristics.

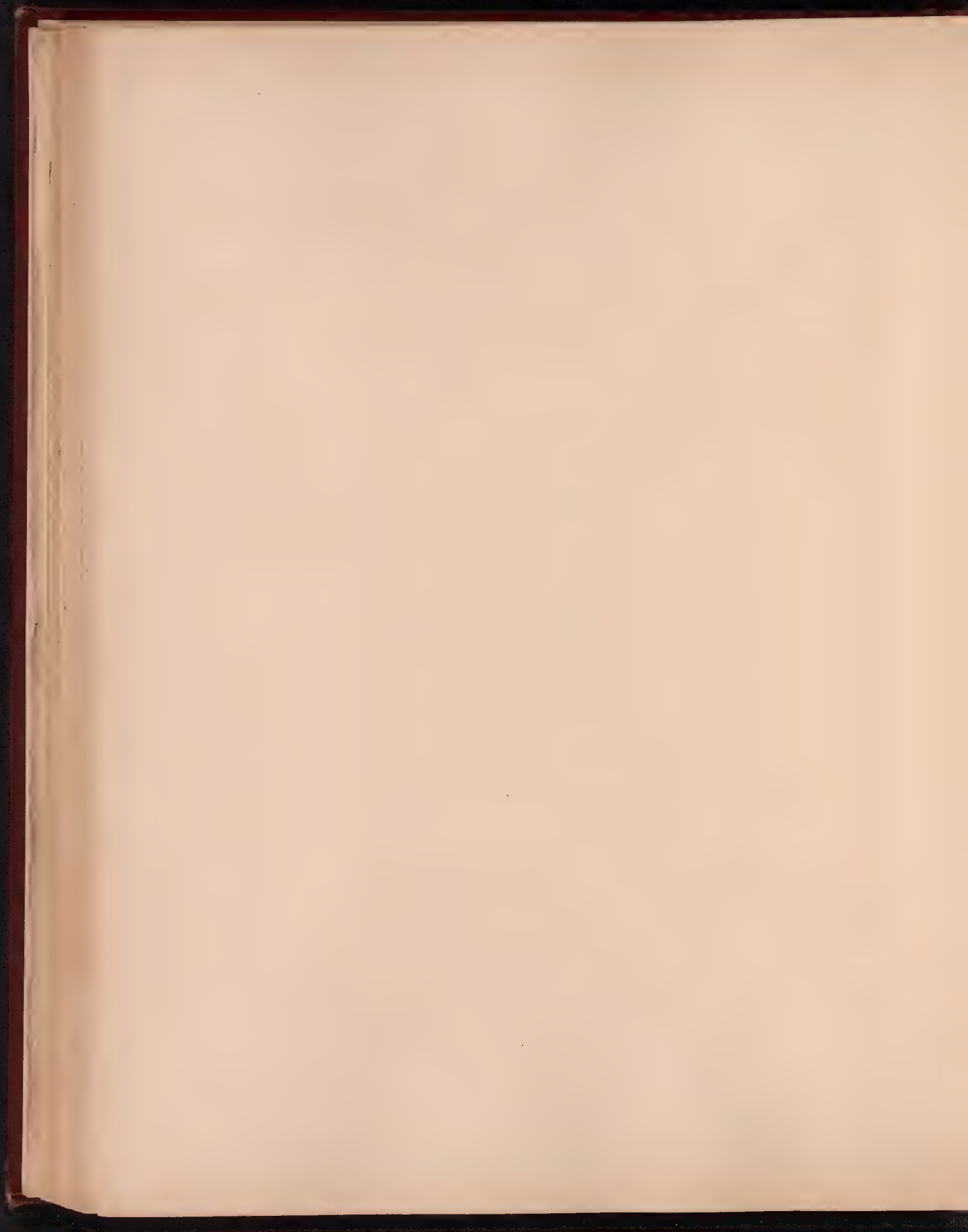
It has been considered a work of the imperial period, perhaps a copy after the Greek paintings of Polygnotus and Posolasius. It was a much-cherished object of study to the great sixteenth century sculptors, and it is said that Michael Angelo refused to restore it on account of its exceeding beauty. It came from the Cæserian Gardens, outside *Porta Portese*, where it was found about A.D. 1500, the period so prolific in discoveries of works of art.

It is a group meriting particular attention; the head is of perfect beauty, and what is most admirable, the head is not dependent upon the elevated and sublime character which belongs exclusively to divinities. Meleager as a famous hunter was but—following the recitals of Homer—a warrior re-named, and in effect, in the infancy of society, when ferocious beasts abounded, and seemed to dispute with man the possession of the earth, the chase was a perilous exercise, a kind of war, and in its useful and patriotic triumphs, the people distinguished not the hunter from the warrior. Meleager is here represented as one of the most beautiful of the children of men, and the delicacy of the features, the soft and captivating expression, the curled hair, and general elegance, all recall and justify the epithet of *blond* given him by the singer of the “*Iliad*.” His carriage, grace of pose, purity of lines and contours, and exquisite delicacy of execution present an image of perfection.

M. de Saint-Victor, however, after a close study of this statue, decided that although all those who have written upon it have, by a common accord, placed it in the first rank of *chefs-d'œuvre* by the most accomplished artists of antiquity, he was unable to endorse the eulogiums that had been lavished without measure upon it. He says it is “full

of beauties," but after severely examining it he cannot but make these new observations, which he believes just and not easily disproved. "In the superior parts it may pass for one of the marvels of sculpture, but all at once as the eye descends it is no longer arrested by a sort of enchantment. Neither the same purity of design, neither the same elegance of form, nor the same sentiment of execution, are any longer seen. The right leg is stiff, and the knee-caps seem obstructed; and with regard to the anatomy, we cannot say it has been designed in a manner entirely satisfactory. The feet are not without delicacy, but the form is too flat, and the arms, admirable to the elbow, are so no further. The draperies and the accessories offer the same disparity, and while we consider attentively the *chlamyde* which falls over the breast in natural folds of excellent workmanship, we find in its extremities it is clumsy and monotonous. The head of the boar is the same, and the dog is certainly work the most mediocre.

"We conclude from all this that the work, in which we recognize two characters in execution, so different the one from the other, has been conceived by a great master, and afterwards finished by a sculptor less able. Or, the same artist, after having conducted the work up to a certain point, has abandoned it for a time, and afterwards taken it up again when age had enfeebled his hand, and the fire of manhood was almost extinguished." Of these two conjectures, he further says, "we can adopt that which we consider the most reasonable; but it is without doubt that the entire group cannot be the product of the same chisel, or of an equal inspiration."







THE SLEEPING ARIADNE.







## THE SLEEPING ARIADNE.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.

**F**OR more than three centuries this beautiful statue was the subject of misapprehension and dispute, and the most eminent art-critics of various periods were unable to agree as to the subject represented. It was long contended that it represented Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, from the bracelet or armlet in the form of a serpent encircling the left arm, and also from its closely resembling the attitude in which, according to Galenus, the unhappy queen was found, with the name of Antony

“Divided  
Between her heart and lips.”

It is a matter of surprise that of all the artists and savants who during this long space of time had studied and admired it, none had remarked that the play and the tensure of the limbs evidently expressed the sleep of a living person, and not the general weighed-down depression

which immediately follows the eternal sleep of the dead. Winckelmann, the German art critic, first disturbed this belief, and described it as representing a Naiad, who, presiding over a fountain, had been lulled asleep by the gentle music of the falling water. This theory was rejected by Visconti, who, with his accustomed skill, proved it to be the statue of Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, sleeping on a rock by the seashore of Naxos, after abandonment by her faithless lover Theseus, who, by her aid, had killed the Minotaur, and escaped from the labyrinth in safety. Visconti rejected Winckelmann's theory on the sufficient grounds that the symbols were not those of such a subject, the drapery was not that of a companion of Satyrs and Bacchantes, the sandals and adornments were too ornate, and the head too elevated in character; and still more, the sad expression did not point to such a subject. After discarding the new denomination propounded by the German savant, he showed how well the statue agreed with the story of Ariadne, and he saw in the disorder of the vestments, and the contraction which prevailed in the attitude, and the unhappy repose, those indications of the violent agitations of love and despair that had preceded it. Visconti's accuracy was subsequently confirmed by the excavation of a fresco at Herculaneum, and also by a small bas-relief of the same subject discovered by Volpato at Lunghezza, a farm belonging to the Strozzi family near Palestrina.

Nothing can exceed the perfectly natural and unaffected beauty of this exquisite antique. The grand form is executed with masterly power, and contrasts effectively with the draperies. The draperies reveal the daughter of Minos, the tunic open at the sides after the Lacedæmonian fashion, and fastened around the figure by a girdle. An expansive *peplum*

is raised to the head in the form of a veil, and over all a third drapery, distinguished from the other by the ornate fringe, and of such amplitude that, after skilfully covering all the lower portion of the limbs, it yet falls in graceful folds upon the rock below. This last piece is not a portion of Ariadne's attire, but is a coverlet ingeniously introduced to indicate the nuptial-bed—so unworthily profaned by the perfidious Theseus. The light *tunica* leaves the bosom half-uncovered, one of the arms supplies the place of a pillow, the other rests negligently over the head. The turn of the beautiful arms, the gentle inclination of the head, and the closed eyelids, to which the positive form of eyelashes has been added, all seem to indicate that she has sunk into a deep sleep. Scarcely the sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care, the balm of hurt minds, but rather

“the drowsy calm  
That steals on worn-out anguish,”

for the features express in the highest degree the sorrow and hopeless despondency into which the departure of her lover has thrown her.

This *chef-d'œuvre* was purchased by Julius II., 1503-13, and used to stand in the gardens of the art-loving Pope, where the great painters and poets of that brilliant epoch were accustomed to assemble. It belongs, probably, to that period of art which lasted from the conquest of Greece by the Romans until Augustus. M. de Saint-Victor—writing in the early part of the present century—said he had been able to detect in the form a kind of inflation, and in some of the draperies a dryness, which would not permit him to recognize in it the hand of an artist of the best period, but a copy made with great care from



an original, famous among the ancients. The nose, the entire mouth, the right hand and part of the left, many of the toes, and some portions of the drapery, are modern restorations.

Beneath the figure is a fine sarcophagus representing the Battle of the Giants.





THE ADONIS.













## THE ADONIS.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.

**S**CULPTURED from the purest kind of Greek marble, remarkable for its snowy whiteness, the pensive expression, attitude, and ideal beauty of this figure, which bears a striking resemblance to the beautiful son of Cinyras, figured on a bas-relief, led to its being restored as such, with the addition of the javelin held in the right hand. But long since has it been decided that it was not intended to represent the favourite of Venus killed while hunting the wild boar, for whose death she wept so many tears, and whose life-blood she changed into the purple anemone. It was undoubtedly intended as a statue of Apollo, represented as receiving the prayers and offerings of mortals—probably a copy of some yet earlier one. The character of the face is that of a being above humanity, and the head, graciously inclined towards the earth, indicates a divinity favourable to the prayers of mortals. Ideal beauty has been

carried in this statue to a very high degree of perfection. The pose is admirable in its natural grace and simplicity, but if we except the hair, which has been executed with great refinement and delicacy, there is a certain stiffness and dryness which would prove that the figure is a copy of some excellent original.

It was discovered in 1780, by the Via Labicana, among the ruins which bore the name *Centocelle*, outside the *Porta Maggiore*, and when dug out was found to be very much mutilated, both the arms were missing near the *deltoides*, the right leg entirely gone, the left foot, and part of the nose. All the parts have been restored with great ability and taste by an Italian sculptor named Carlo Albacini, who has seized with much intelligence the character and forms of his model. It is greatly to be regretted that all restorations of antique monuments were not executed by artists of merit.

The statue stands in a niche of the small but beautifully decorated "Cabinet of Masks"—a room due to the munificence of Pius VI.—ornamented with columns and pilasters of alabaster, and red porphyry tables which, supported by bronze feet, have been made to serve as seats. The mosaic pavement (from which the Cabinet is named) was brought from Hadrian's villa in 1780, and is divided into small compartments magnificently adorned with arabesques and rich festoons of flowers. The centre contains masks crowned with laurel and ivy, festive emblems, and instruments of Bacchus. The ceiling is decorated with oil-paintings of classic subjects by Domenico de Angelis, one of them representing the beautiful Adonis standing before Venus, who sits near the trunk of a tree.



THE LAOCOON.

BY AGESANDER.













## THE LAOCOON.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.

"Or turning to the Vatican, go see  
Laocoon's torture, dignifying pain—  
A father's love and mortals' agony."

CHILDE HAROLD.

**I**N an exact manner this wonderful composition embodies the famous description of Virgil in the Second Book of the "Æneid." Laocoon, as a priest of Apollo, was commissioned by the Trojans to sacrifice a bullock to Neptune in order to render the god propitious. During the immolation two enormous serpents came up out of the sea, and attacked Laocoon's two sons, Ethron and Melanthus, who stood by the altar. The father attempted to defend his sons, but was himself entangled in their complicated and deadly folds. The moment chosen by the sculptor is that when Laocoon is falling on the sacred altar in the vain effort to extricate himself and his children from the innumerable coils of the

horrible reptiles. The terror, the parental anguish, the priestly dignity are fully depicted, and the physical pain forcibly rendered in the contracted muscles, the swollen veins, the tendons of the arms and feet, the convulsively contracted breast, and the overmastering agitation of a violent death.

This most original work was one of those discovered during the Pontificate of Julius II., to whom Art owes so much. It was found in a vineyard at "Le Sette Sale," amongst the ruins of the Baths of Titus on the *Esquiline*, in the same niche in which Pliny says it formerly stood, together with other renowned works of art. It is the joint work of three ancient Rhodian sculptors, Agesander and his two sons, Polydorus and Athenodorus, who lived about the time of Alexander. When discovered—in 1506—it excited unusual wonder and admiration, and a poem was composed on the occasion by Sadoletto. The discoverer, a certain Felix de Freddis, had the fact recorded on his tombstone in the Church of the *Ara Caeli* in the Capitol. Winckelmann says the right arm of the father was restored in *terra cotta* by Bernini, and those of both the sons in stucco. Canova thought that the arm of the father should not be stretched out so far, but rather more inclined and bent back over the head, because that unnatural tension could not produce the strength required to bend it. According to Pliny it was cut out of one block of marble, but Michael Angelo affirmed it to be composed of three separate pieces.

With regard to execution, Laocoon's act of sacrifice was a crime against Apollo, and his punishment, sudden and inevitable, could not be more strikingly depicted. There is no escape—no help. There is something lightning-like in the composition, for though it embraces

three separate movements, it combines them so completely that they appear as one. The pyramidal structure of the whole, culminating in the figure of Laocoon—the arrangement of the serpents, which are coiled indissolubly round the three bodies, separating them, and yet uniting them into a whole—the contrast—the gradation—all merit high admiration.

We see in works like the Laocoon the last stage of an independent development of Greek sculpture, and one that encroaches upon the picturesque. In this respect the Laocoon may be designated as marking the extreme limit.

The School of Rhodes—of which this is the principal work—is connected with that of Lysippus, and is therefore a final offshoot of Peloponnesian art.

We are far from the calm power and dignity of the school which produced the Theseus. In the Rhodian School we find a tendency to exaggerated pathos has also been reached. As it has been well remarked of a purer epoch, "In the Niobe (of the School of Scopas or Praxiteles) we are touched with the moral power of the tragedy; in the Laocoon we are seized with horror at a pathological catastrophe."

Of the absence of repose in this composition, Mr. Ruskin has said:<sup>1</sup> "I believe, however, that by comparing the convulsions of the Laocoon with the calmness of the Elgin Theseus, we may obtain a general idea of the effect of the influence as shown by its absence in one, and presence in the other, of two works which, as far as artistical merit is concerned, are in some measure parallel; not that I believe even in this respect the

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<sup>1</sup> "Modern Painters."

Laocoon is justifiably comparable with the Theseus. I suppose that no group has exercised so pernicious an influence on art as this—a subject ill chosen, meanly conceived, and unnaturally treated, recommended to imitation by subtleties of execution, and accumulation of technical knowledge." Mr. Ruskin further contrasts it with Michael Angelo's treatment of a subject in some respects similar (the "Plague of the Fiery Serpents"), much to the disadvantage of the former.







THE NILE.











## THE NILE.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.



COLOSSAL group portraying in symbolic form the celebrated Egyptian river. Ancient mythology presents to the imagination no subject more happy than this emblematic figure of the far-famed Nile. The impenetrable obscurity which so long hovered over its source; the enormous influence—beneficent or fatal—it exercised upon the destinies of a great people in fertilizing the fruitful soil of Egypt, and the religious terror it inspired, caused it to be regarded as a god.

The river itself abounds in all the materials necessary to call forth an artist's noblest inspiration. About the god are grouped in every variety of graceful attitude or action sixteen little genii, of which the allegorical number indicates the rise of sixteen cubits, sign certain of an abundant harvest, in response to the hopes and prayers of Egypt. Some of the infants are climbing on the shoulders of the propitious divinity, others are sporting with the ichneumons and crocodiles.



Charmed at first, we admire the excellent taste of the sculptor, but on examining it more attentively, we soon observe a thought and purpose more profound. In all these various attitudes and actions of the children, everything is emblematic. It is a kind of drama, in which we see developed almost the entire history of the river, and its principal phenomena. The groups figure the first approach of the inundation, and so on others, by the most ingenious gradation, express the great influence exercised on fertility, of which the Nile-god is the dispensator, unto the last figure, who with a triumphal air stands up in the middle of the delicious fruits which crown the symbolic cornucopiæ, the god regarding him the while with a look of soft paternal love admirably rendered. The subject is so rich in invention, that one finds everywhere something that helps to tell the allegoric story. Observe the little fellow below who now covers with drapery that source which was to remain for ever unknown. It is one of those masterpieces in which are collected all kinds of beauty, rendered by the almost incomprehensible process of the artists of antiquity. In the colossal figure the mild indolence of a benefactor and yet the sublimity of a god are wonderfully blended.

It is of Roman workmanship, a copy of some Greek original belonging to the best period of the Alexandrine School. It was discovered under the Pontificate of Leo X. near the church of Santa Maria Sopra la Minerva, where a Serapeium anciently stood.

The bas-reliefs at the base continue the history of the river and its renowned productions.



THE ASTRAGALIZUSA,

OR NYMPH OF DIANA.














## THE ASTRAGALIZUSA, OR NYMPH OF DIANA.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

 HIS graceful composition was found about a century ago in the Villa Verospi, by the Salarian Gate at Rome, on the supposed site of the magnificent gardens of the palace of Sallust, the Latin historian. On the same spot the remains of a fountain richly adorned with marbles and mosaics was also discovered, and it has been conjectured that this figure, and one similar to it, found at the same time, formed part of its adornment.

Its size is rather smaller than life, which renders the above conjecture more probable, and the lines of the composition seem adapted for some structural decoration. The nymph is reclining or seated on the ground leaning on her left hand, while her right hand is extended forward. She wears a *chiton*, which falls from the left shoulder,

leaving the breast exposed. On the base lies a bow terminating in gryphons' heads, which led Combe to suppose that the figure represented a nymph of Diana reposing after the fatigues of the chase. But the position and action of the figure rather suggest that she is in the act of playing at the game of knuckle-bones, *astragali*, or *tali*. As the right arm is a restoration, the original motion of the right hand cannot be exactly ascertained, but when compared with other *astragalizusæ*, such as that in the Palazzo Colonna at Rome, and that in the Louvre, the resemblance is so great as to leave no doubt that the girl is engrossed in the pastime. The illustration of the game of *astragali* was a favourite subject in ancient art; Pliny mentions a celebrated group in bronze, by Polycletus, of two boys, *astragalizontes*; and female figures engaged in the game occur not only in sculpture, but in terra-cottas and vases.





LUCIUS VERUS.













## LUCIUS VERUS.

IN THE VATICAN, ROME.



HERE are few important personages of antiquity whose portraits have been so persistently multiplied as that of L. Verus, and few, without doubt, who have been less worthy of such an honour.

Adopted brother of Marcus Aurelius, and by him associated in the empire, he dishonoured his high rank by the effeminacy and grossness of his habits, instead of sharing the weight and cares of government with that excellent ruler: but the unworthy Lucius, who, perhaps, merited comparison with Nero, was endowed with a form remarkable for its nobleness and physical beauty. The expression was even somewhat grave and reflective, although a certain superciliousness was one of its characteristics. He wore a full beard, and he so loved his luxuriant hair that he was in the habit of using for powder *poussière d'or* to give to himself yet greater brilliance and magnificence.

All his numerous portrait-busts are remarkable for the extreme care with which the artists have striven to render the curling hair, which in its natural elegance of adjustment added fresh grace to the regularity of the features of the model. The sculptors vied with each other in giving due flexibility and lightness to the masses, which they grouped with all the truth and grace of nature, the details being chiselled with astonishing dexterity of hand, almost to the point of giving those effects which are born of the art of the painter alone.

The pose of the figure is both firm and animated. The Roman military costume, adorned with a *paludamentum* thrown over the shoulders, and a richly embossed cuirass, which is a *chef-d'œuvre* of design and style, is ornamented with figures of Gorgons, military trophies, and the emblems of a conquered province. The title of *Parthicus* undeservedly assumed, refers to the victories gained over the Parthians by his gallant legate Avidius Cassius, while he expended his time at Antiochia in lascivious festivals, on one of which he is said to have spent a sum nearly equivalent to £50,000. Admirable in all the parts left uncovered, the eye can yet follow the contours, even under the cuirass in which the torso is encased.





THALIA,  
AS THE PASTORAL MUSE.














## THALIA.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

HE muse Thalia is placed before us in her capacity as the muse of pastoral poetry, fully draped in *chiton* and *peplos*, her brow graced by a chaplet of ivy. She stands in a contemplative but commanding attitude, resting the end of her crook on her right side. This may be taken as a very beautiful example of a draped statue, and as remarkably well preserved. Dr. Kett considered it so inimitable for delicate proportions and transparent drapery, which adorns without concealing any part of the figure, that it exceeds all praise.

What "leaf-fringed legends" haunt the cool shades of *Tempe*, beloved of gods and men! And what memories of its denizens,

"For ever piping songs, for ever new,"

are conjured up by such a subject!

Thalia presided over all country festivals, and was a divinity

consecrated to the charge of all those agreeable pursuits involved in the cultivation of the fruits of the earth; and the muse was justly occupied in presiding over those innocent amusements which gave zest to labour, like flowers cast over the steep and rugged foot-path of life.

“O Attic shape! Fair attitude! With brede  
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
As doth eternity: cold Pastoral!  
When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
'Beauty is truth, truth, beauty,'—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

The celebrated Townley Venus and this statue were discovered at the same time in the Baths of Claudius, at Ostia.





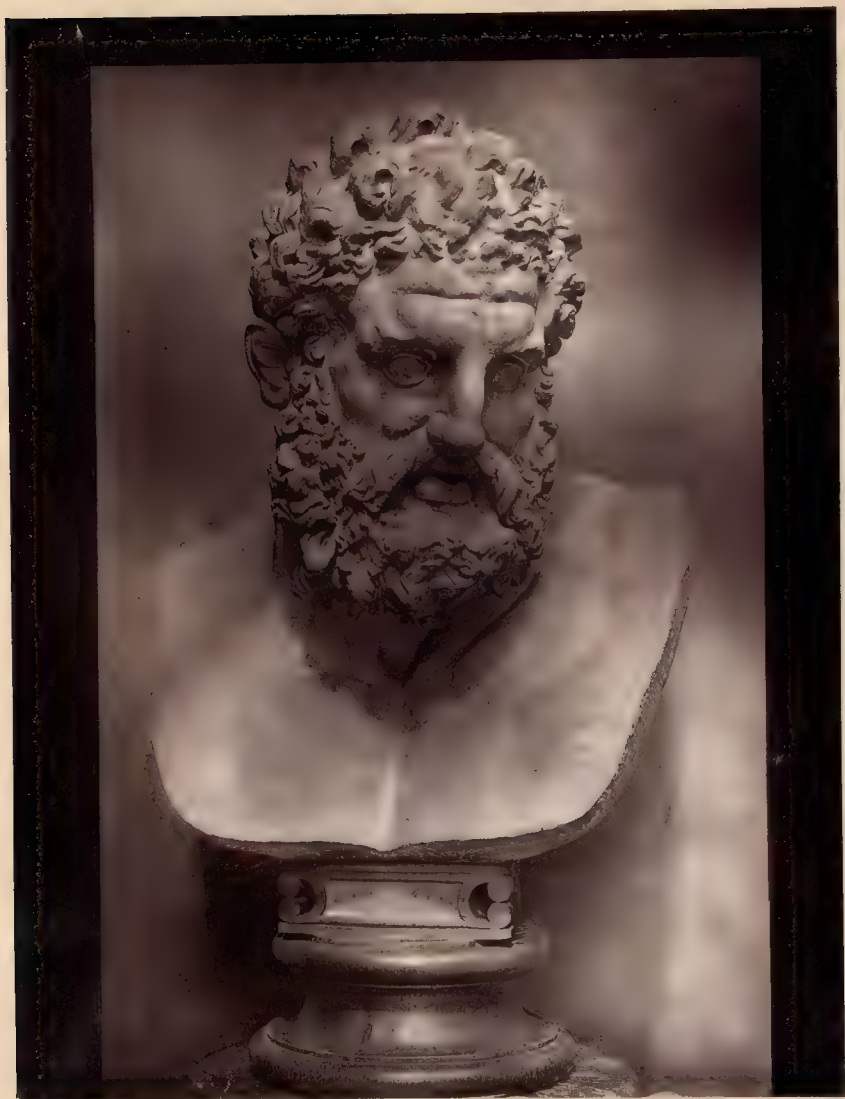
BUST OF HERCULES.

COPY OF THE CELEBRATED STATUE OF GLYCON.













## BUST OF HERCULES.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

**N**ONE that is known offers a grander embodiment of the head of the hero than the head depicted in this colossal bust. It probably belonged to a figure similar in pose and type to the celebrated Farnese Statue by Glycon, now in the Museum at Naples, which represents Hercules resting after he has carried off the apples of the Hesperides. It was one of the twelve labours of the Theban to obtain some of the golden and closely-guarded fruit; and he is sometimes represented gathering the apples, and the dragon which watched the tree appears bowing down his head as if he had received a death-wound.

Mr. Combe remarks that the face of this bust is broader than that of the Farnese Statue, the muscles of the cheeks and forehead more convex, the hair and beard in more distinct masses, and the whole head executed in a freer and bolder style. The ears are represented in a swollen or lacerated condition, which the ancients noticed as

a marked peculiarity of athletes when engaged in boxing and other exercises of the *pancratium*. This type of Hercules has been supposed to be derived from a work of Lysippus.

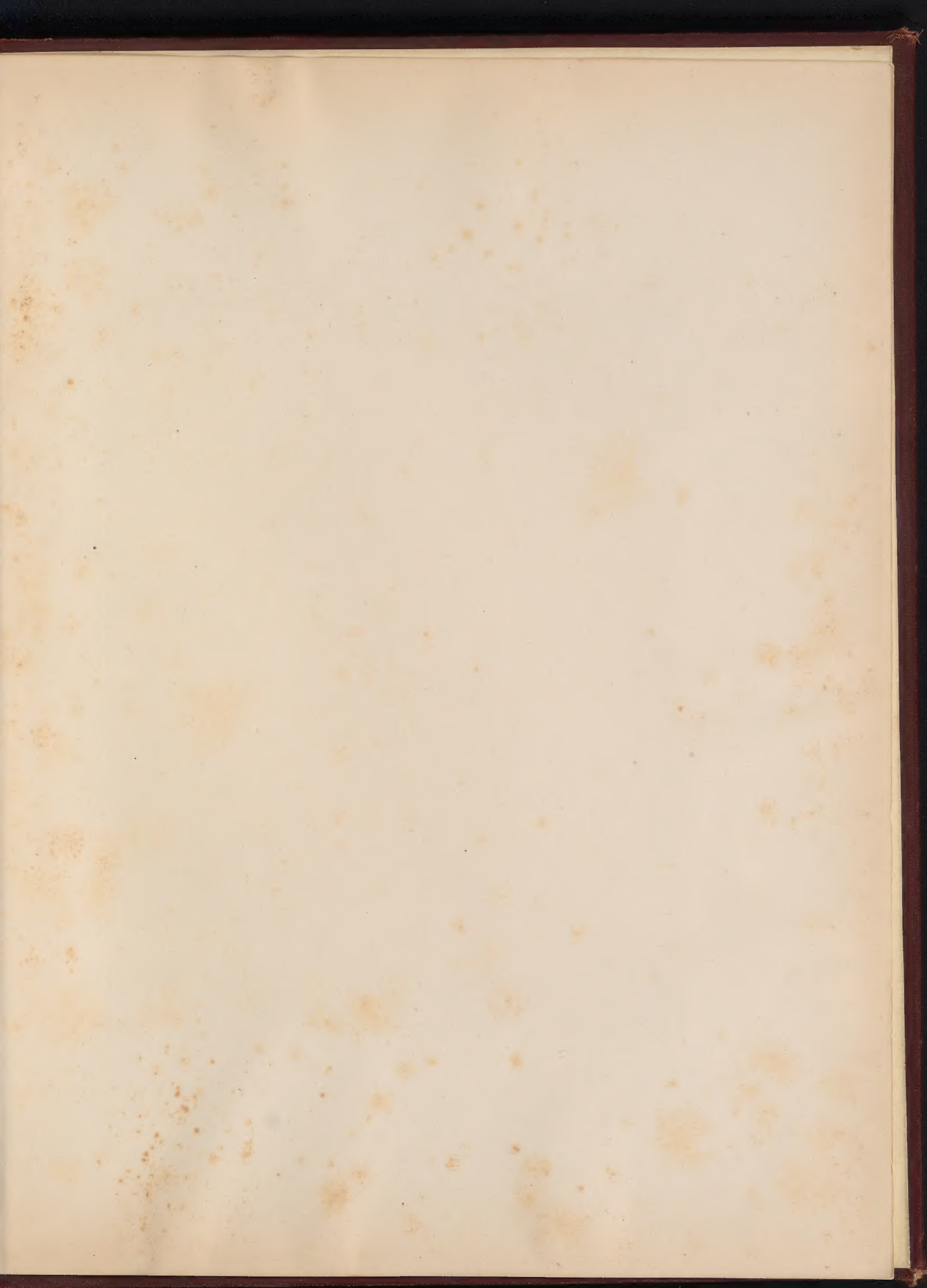
The head is in very fine condition; the nose, the right ear, a piece of the right cheek, and the bust are restored.

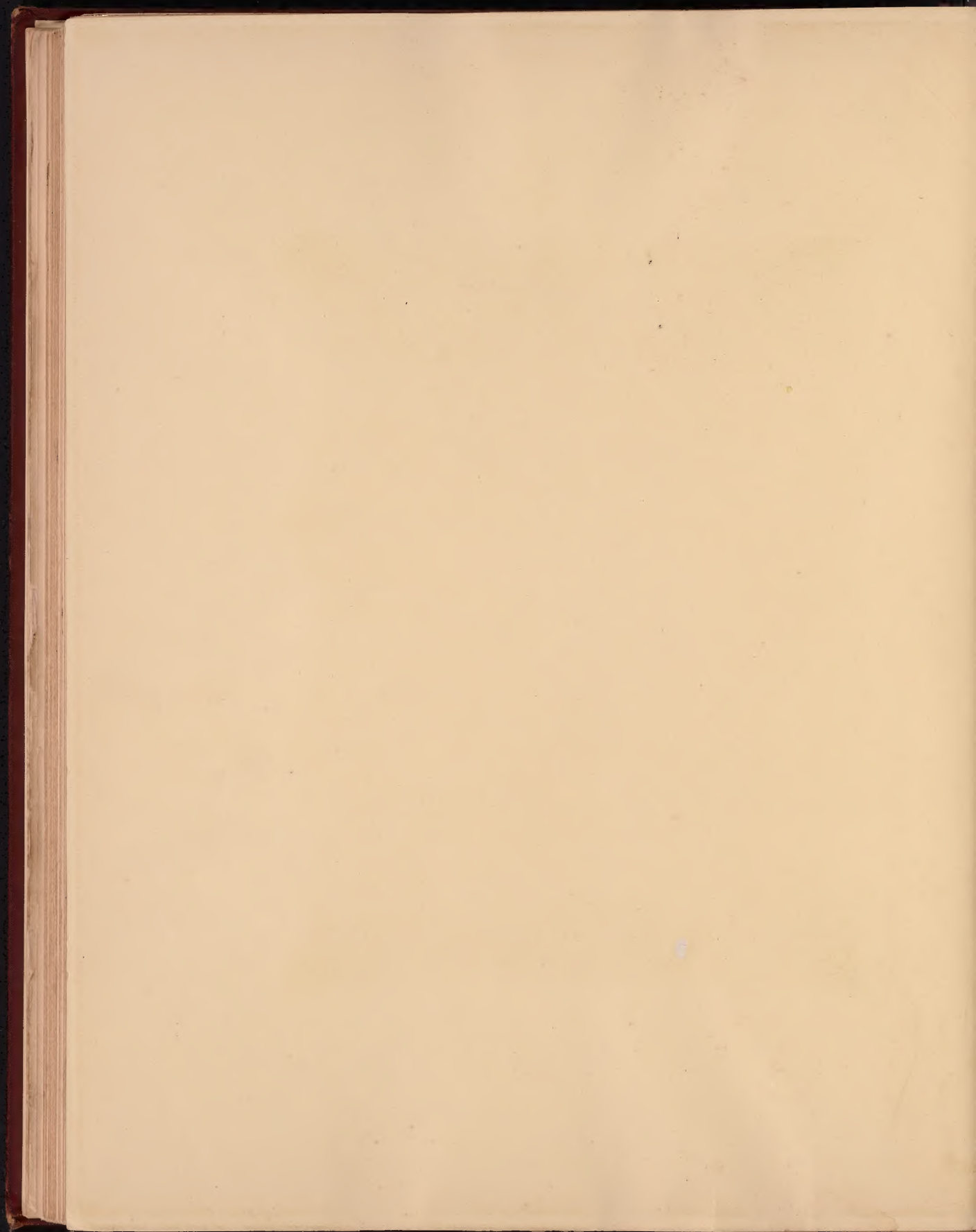














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